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Frances Ongley

Jan 28. 1815.

To Augusta Sayre

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THE

OBSERVER:

BEING A COLLECTION OF

MORAL, LITERARY AND FAMILIAR

ESSAYS.

——MULTORUM PROVIDUS URBES
ET MORES HOMINUM INSPEXIT—— (HORAT.)

By *RICHARD CUMBERLAND*, Esq.

THE FIFTH EDITION, NEWLY ARRANGED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ENTIRE TRANSLATION OF THE COMEDY OF THE CLOUDS.

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THE

OBSERVER.

No. CXIV.

THAT period of the Athenian hiſtory, which is included within the æra of Piſiſtratus and the death of Menander the comic poet, may be juſtly ſtiled *the literary age of Greece.* I propoſe to dedicate ſome of theſe papers to a review of that period; but as the earlier ages of poetry, though in general obſcure, yet afford much intereſting matter of enquiry, it will be proper to take up the Athenian hiſtory from its origin, becauſe it is ſo connected with the account I mean to give, that I cannot otherwiſe preſerve that order and continuation in point of time, which perſpicuity requires.

This account may properly be called a hiſtory of the human underſtanding within

a period peculiarly favourable to the production of genius; and, though I cannot expect that my labour will in the end furniſh any thing more than what every literary man has ſtored in his memory, or can reſort to in his books, ſtill it will have the merit of being a ſelection uninterrupted and unmixed with other events, that crowd and obſcure it in the original relations, to which he muſt otherwiſe refer. The wars, both foreign and domeſtic, which the ſmall communities of Greece were perpetually engaged in, occupy much the greater part of the hiſtorian's attention, and the reader, whoſe inquiries are directed to the ſubject I am about to treat of, muſt make his way through many things, not very intereſting to an elegant and inquiſitive mind, before he can diſcover,

Quid Sophocles et Theſpis et Æſchylus utile ferrent.

Such will not envy me the labour of having turned over a heavy maſs of ſcholiaſts and grammarians, or heſitate to prefer accepting the reſult of my inquiries to the taſk of following the like track in purſuit of his own.

The

The Athenians were a moſt extraordinary people; eminent in arms and in arts: Of their military atchievements I do not profeſs to treat, and if the reader takes leſs delight in hearing of the ravages of war than of the progreſs of literature, he may, in the contemplation of theſe placid ſcenes, undiſturbed by tumult and unſtained with blood, experience ſome degree of that calm recreation of mind, which deludes life of its ſolicitude, and forms the temperate enjoyment of a contemplative man.

Ogyges is generally ſuppoſed to have been the founder of the Athenian monarchy, but in what æra of the world we ſhall place this illuſtrious perſon, whether he was Noah or one of the Titans, grandſon to Jupiter or contemporary with Moſes, is an enquiry, which the learned have agitated with much zeal and very little ſucceſs. It is however agreed that there was a grievous flood in his time, which deluged the province afterwards called Attica; but that happily for King Ogyges, being a perſon of gigantic ſtature, he ſurvived the general calamity. A period of one hundred and eighty-nine years ſucceeded to this flood, in which this province

remained ſo depopulated, that it is generally ſuppoſed no king reigned over it till the time of Cecrops, the founder of Athens, from him at firſt named Cecropia.

Cecrops made many prudent inſtitutes for the benefit of his riſing ſtate during a long reign of fifty years, and, by eſtabliſhing the rites of matrimony, aboliſhed the promiſcuous commerce of the ſexes, in which they lived before his time; by theſe and other regulations, upon a general numbering of all his ſubjects, he found the male adults in his dominions to amount to twenty thouſand, every perſon of the above deſcription being directed to bring a ſtone in his hand and caſt it down in a ſtated place: This prince, being an Egyptian, introduced the mythology of his native country, upon which ſo many Grecian fables were formed, and from which a learned modern has with great ſagacity traced a very curious analogy with the Moſaic accounts of the early ages: The Greeks adopted the fables without comprehending their alluſions, and thereupon formed the conſtitution of a religion, which kept poſſeſſion of great part of the world, till revelation diſpelled its errors and

enlightened

enlightened the Gentile nations. Till Cecrops erected altars to Jupiter, made libations and eſtabliſhed his worſhip, he was not known in Greece as a God: He ſet up the image of Mercury, ſacrificed to Saturn, Ops, Rhea, Juno, and Minerva, and was in fact the inſtitutor of the Pagan theology: The gods of Cecrops were ſoon made uſeful inſtruments in the hand of the founder of a monarchy, for before he could induce his people to cultivate the dry and barren country of Attica, he was forced to play off his new machinery, by raiſing a conteſt in heaven between Neptune and Minerva for the patronage of Cecropia, the capital of his new empire: He found intereſt enough with the deities to turn their deciſion in Minerva's favour; and by this contrivance he diverted his ſubjects from their maritime attachments to agriculture, and particularly to the cultivation of the olive: To ſtrengthen ſtill further the tutelary title of Minerva, he enforced the dedication of the city, by changing its name from Cecropia to Athenæ, a ſacrifice few founders would have made, and a ſtrong proof of his good ſenſe and talents for government. If the reader recol-

lects the ſtory Ovid relates of Minerva's treatment of Erichthonius, Cecrops's ſon, he will not conceive highly of the gratitude, or even purity of that virgin deity's character; though as we are ſetting out upon the Athenian ground, it may be not very prudent to talk ſcandal of Minerva;

At virgo eſt—negat Aglaurus, negat anguis apertus.
(DAR. PHRYG. lib. 2.

Cecrops enjoyed his new government for the ſpace of fifty years, but his attachment to his native ſoil of Egypt drew him into an unlucky expedition with King Pharoah, in whoſe company he was drowned in the Red Sea, whilſt in purſuit of the Iſraelites; notwithſtanding which we are informed, upon the authority of the poet Euripides, that he was tranſlated into the ſtarry ſphere, and became a conſtellation of ſome dignity after his death; and if we conſider what obligations this prince had conferred on the gods, as well as men, we ſhall not think him too highly rewarded; on the contrary, we muſt own he was rather hardly dealt with both by Minerva as well as Mercury; the former of which ſhut his ſon in a cheſt in company with

with a dragon, and the latter betrayed his daughter into a falſe ſtep; an attachment, which though it does not convict her of vulgarity of taſte, certainly does no credit to the chaſtity of her morals, or the gratitude of her ſeducer.

Cranaus ſucceeded on the death of Cecrops, and after a reign of nine years was depoſed by Amphictyon, who ſeized the throne of Athens, and rendered his name memorable to poſterity by eſtabliſhing the great Council or Law-Courts of the Amphictyons, who held their meetings at Thermopylæ. This prince introduced the practice of diluting and mixing wines; a practice that obtained through all Greece for many ages; in memory of which ſober inſtitution, Amphictyon erected an altar to Bacchus the Upright, and placed it in the Temple of the Hours: He alſo conſecrated an altar to the nymphs near at hand in the ſame Temple, that mankind might thereby be kept in mind of the gracefulneſs of temperance; and it is not eaſy to find any inſtance in the pagan worſhip, where ſuperſtition has been applied to more elegant or moral purpoſes. In ſmall communities ſuch

regulations may be carried into effect, where all the people are under the eye of the ſovereign, and in the ſame ſpirit of reformation Amphictyon publiſhed an edict, that none of his ſubjects ſhould indulge themſelves in the uſe of undiluted wine, except in one ſmall glaſs after their meals to give them a taſte of the potency of the god; under this reſtriction he permitted the free uſe of diluted wines, provided they obſerved in their meetings to addreſs their libations to Jupiter, the preſerver of man's health.

This virtuous uſurper, after an adminiſtration of ten years, was in his turn expelled from the throne of Athens by that Erechthonius, the ſon of Cecrops, whom Minerva ſhut up in a cheſt with his companion the dragon, and committed to the keeping of his ſiſters: This is the perſon whom Homer mentions in his ſecond book of the Iliad by the name of Erechtheus: He is celebrated for having firſt yoked horſes to a chariot, and alſo for introducing the uſe of ſilver coin in Attica.

Primus Erechthonius currus et quatuor auſus
Jungere Equos, rapidiſq; rotis inſiſtere Victor.

But

But the inſtitutions which have rendered the name of Erechthonius famous to all poſterity, are thoſe of the Eleuſynian Myſteries and the feaſts of the Panathenæa. The firſt of theſe he eſtabliſhed in honour of Ceres, on account of a ſeaſonable ſupply of corn from the granaries of Egypt, when the city and territory of Athens were in imminent danger of ſtarving by an extraordinary drought: Theſe ſacred myſteries were of Egyptian origin, and as they conſiſted of forms and rites, unintelligible to the vulgar, and probably very little comprehended even by the initiated, the ſecret was well kept.

As for the Panathenæa, they were inſtituted, as their name indicates, in honour of Minerva, and were the great feſtival of the Athenians: The celebration was originally comprized in one day, but afterwards it was extended to ſeveral, and the various athletic games and races, with the recitation of poems, that accompanied it, attracted an immenſe reſort of ſpectators. Every ſpecies of contention, both on foot and horſeback, drew the bold and adventrous to the field of fame, whilſt the prizes for muſic and the

rival diſplay of the drama in after-times recreated the aged, the elegant, and the learned: The conquerors in the ſeveral games gave entertainments to their friends, in which they preſided, crowned with olive in honour of the guardian deity: Theſe were ſcenes of the greateſt feſtivity, till, when Athens had ſubmitted to the Roman yoke, thoſe ſanguinary conquerors introduced the combats of gladiators into theſe favorite ſolemnities. Every age had its ſhare in contributing to the ſpectacle; the old men walked in proceſſion with branches of olive in their hands, the young in armour with ſhield and ſpear; the labouring peaſants with ſpades, and their wives with water-buckets: The boys crowned with garlands, and dreſſed in frocks or ſurplices of white, chaunted hymns to Minerva; and the girls followed with baſkets, in which the ſacrificing utenſils were contained.

A ſuperſtition, ſupported by ſplendor, and enlivened with feſtivity, was well calculated to keep a laſting hold upon the human mind.

No. CXV.

THE Eleuſynian Myſteries, inſtituted by Erechthonius, were celebrated in the time of autumn every fifth year at Eleuſis, where a great concourſe of people met upon the occaſion: The ceremonies of initiation were preceded by ſacrifices, prayers, and ablutions; the candidates were exerciſed in trials of ſecrecy, and prepared by vows of continence; every circumſtance was contrived to render the act as awful and ſtriking as poſſible; the initiation was performed at midnight, and the candidate was taken into an interior ſacriſty of the temple, with a myrtle garland on his head; here he was examined if he had duly performed his ſtated ablutions; clean hands, a pure heart, and a native proficiency in the Greek tongue were indiſpenſible requiſites; having paſſed this examination, he was admitted into the temple, which was an edifice of immenſe magnitude; after proclamation made that the ſtricteſt ſilence ſhould be obſerved, the officiating prieſt took out the ſacred volumes containing the myſteries; theſe books

were written in a ſtrange character, interſperſed with the figures of animals and various emblems and hieroglyphics; they were preſerved in a cavity between two large blocks of ſtone, cloſely fitted to each other, and they were carefully replaced by the prieſt with much ſolemnity, after he had explained what was neceſſary to the initiated out of them. The initiated were enjoined to honour their parents, to reverence the immortal gods, and abſtain from particular ſorts of diet, particularly tame fowls, fiſh, beans, and certain ſorts of apples.

When this was finiſhed, the prieſts began to play off the whole machinery of the temple in all its terror; doleful groans and lamentations broke out from the fane, thick and ſudden darkneſs involved the temple, momentary gleams of light flaſhed forth every now and then with tremblings, as if an earthquake had ſhaken the edifice; ſometimes the coruſcations continued long enough to diſcover all the ſplendor of the ſhrines and images, accompanied with voices in concert, dancings and muſic; at other times, during the darkneſs, ſeverities were exerciſed upon the initiated by perſons unſeen;

unſeen; they were dragged to the ground by the hair of their heads, and there beaten and laſhed, without knowing from whom the blows proceeded, or why they were inflicted: Lightnings and thunderings and dreadful apparitions were occaſionally played off, with every invention to terrify and aſtoniſh; at length, upon a voice crying out *Conx! Ompax!* the ceremony was concluded and the initiated diſmiſſed. The garment worn upon this occaſion was not to be laid aſide, whilſt it would hang together, and the ſhreds were then to be dedicated at ſome ſhrine, as a tattered trophy of the due performance of the myſteries of Ceres.

Theſe initiations were conceived to lead to the enjoyment of a happier lot in this life, and to fit a man for a more dignified place amongſt the bleſt hereafter; and they were in ſuch general reſpect, that it afforded great cauſe of reproach againſt Socrates, for having neglected his initiation. The vows of ſecrecy, and the penalties to be inflicted on violation, were as binding as could poſſibly be deviſed.

Hitherto the riſing ſtate of Athens had not been engaged in war, but no ſooner was

it

it involved in disputes with the Eleusynians, on account of some prædatory incursions, than the idea took its rise of devoting human victims to appease the hostile divinities, and to purchase conquest by the oblation of what was dearest and most valuable in life.

As we are now approaching towards the time of Homer, who records instances of this sort, it may be curious to mark when that savage superstition had its origin. No example occurs to me in Grecian story antecedent to Erechthonius, who, in obedience to an oracle, sacrificed one of his daughters, and some say all, to purchase thereby success against the Eleusynians. It is however a matter of less wonder than regret how this idea should obtain so generally; when a people are in the habit of making animal sacrifices a part of their worship, and whose religion it is to believe that intercession can be made to the gods, and favours obtained by the blood of victims taken from the brute creation, the thought of ascending a step higher in the dignity of the oblation, naturally leads to the hope of purchasing a greater reward. With these ideas enthu-

siastic

ſiaſtic ſpirits, like Decius and Curtius amongſt the Romans, ruſhed upon ſelf-deſtruction, and Erechthonius, king of Athens, devoted his daughters, Codrus himſelf—*If the blood of bulls and goats and the aſhes of a heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh, how much more ſhall the blood*, &c. &c. &c. There is a wild magnanimity in the idea highly captivating: Cicero more than once alludes to this action of Erechthonius, and in his oration for Sextus exclaims—*Shall I after ſo many illuſtrious deeds ſhrink from death, which even the daughters of Erechthonius, with all the weakneſs of their ſex about them, reſigned themſelves to without regret?* Let the mind be poſſeſſed with the perſuaſion of immortal happineſs annexed to the act, and there will be no want of candidates to ſtruggle for the glorious prerogative. Erechthonius and his daughters were aſſociated to the deities after their death, altars were dedicated and a temple erected to them in the citadel of Athens, where divine honours were paid to their memories. The Eleuſynians were defeated and deſpoiled of all they poſſeſſed, except the myſteries of Ceres abovementioned;

tioned; of theſe they were left in undiſturbed enjoyment: Their king Eumolpus was ſlain in battle, but Neptune, whoſe ſon he was, revenged his loſs by ſtriking his conqueror dead with his trident.

Thus periſhed Erechthonius by immortal hands, if we take the authority of Euripides the tragic poet, after he had reigned fifty years in Athens: In his time the people of Attica, heretofore called Cecropians, took the name of Athenians: Ovid, whoſe metamorphoſes mix much ancient truth with fable, ſays *that this prince at his death left it doubtful with poſterity, whether he excelled moſt in juſtice as a King, or in military glory as a General.*

Ægeus, the reputed father of Theſeus, was the eighth king of Athens, reckoning from Cecrops, and ſon of Pandion II. grandſon of Erechthonius, the crown having deſcended regularly from father to ſon through ſeveral generations: After remaining childleſs for ſeveral years, he conſulted the oracle at Delphi upon the mode of obtaining an heir; to a very plain queſtion he obtained a very obſcure anſwer, and, not being able to ſolve the ænigma himſelf, conſulted ſeveral

ral perſons upon the interpretation of it, and amongſt others his friend Pittheus, king of Trœzene, from whoſe ſagacity he promiſed himſelf a ſolution of the difficulty: This wiſe prince had a daughter named Æthra, and ſhe having admitted Ægeus to a ſecret conſultation by night in the fane of Minerva, proved a more able interpreter of the Delphic oracle than her father, and put Ægeus in poſſeſſion of his wiſhes by bearing him a ſon: This ſon was the hero Theſeus, but it cannot be diſguiſed, that a doubt was ſtarted, whether Neptune had not a better claim to the child than Ægeus; for the princeſs Æthra is charged with admitting both viſitors in the ſame evening, and when the controverſy lies between a mortal and an immortal lover, the moſt that can be ſaid for Ægeus is, that it leaves the caſe doubtful. The king of Athens put in his claim, by leaving his ſword and ſandals in cuſtody of Æthra, when he underſtood ſhe was pregnant, enjoining her to let the child, if he proved a ſon, remain at Trœzene, until he became adult, and had ſtrength enough to remove a block of ſtone, under which he depoſited his pledges; on the hilt of the

ſword,

ſword, which was ivory, he cauſed to be engraved his name and titles, and Ægeus declared he would acknowledge the bearer of thoſe pledges, and adopt him as his heir: This being done, he returned to Athens, and celebrated the Panathenæa with uncommon ſplendor.

This monarch filled the throne of Athens for the ſpace of forty-eight years, and terminated his life by caſting himſelf into the ſea, thence called Ægean, in deſpair upon diſcovering the veſſel, that brought his ſon Theſeus from his Cretan expedition againſt the Minotaur, approach the ſhores of Attica with black ſails, when the ſignal of life and victory was to be the contrary diſplay of white ones, which Theſeus by a fatal neglect had failed to put out upon his coming in ſight of the coaſt.

The impatient and deſpairing parent precipitated himſelf into the ocean, and the ſon ſucceeded to his throne. There is no hero in antiquity, who for his magnanimity, his adventures, or the exquiſite beauty and perfection of his perſon has been more celebrated than Theſeus: In ſome of the actions of his life he performed real and diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed ſervices to his country; in others he appears to have been governed merely by an extravagant and wild paſſion for adventure: No hero has furniſhed more themes to the poets, and few princes have at times deſerved better of their ſubjects: By his valour in action and the terror of his name he cleared many regions of thoſe lawleſs clans of robbers and plunderers, with which they were infeſted to the diſgrace and danger of ſociety: Ambitious to emulate the fame of his contemporary Hercules, he ſeems ſometimes to have forgotten that he had ſubjects under his care and command, and roved about in queſt of adventures, the general champion of diſtreſs, and the ſworn exterminator of monſters and tyrants, whereever they were to be found: Preceded by his axe-bearers in commemoration of his deſtruction of the robbers, and carrying on his ſhoulder the ponderous club of Corynætes, whom he vanquiſhed, he marched in triumph to Delphi, like another Hercules after his labours: The bulls of Crete and Marathon and the Cremmyonian boar were trophies, that might vie with the hydra; and Corcyon, whom he ſlew, was

as

as formidable a champion as Antæus, and fixed the triumph of agility over ſtrength: He killed Procruſtes, whoſe couch was as fatal as the den of Cacus.

Theſeus, upon his acceſſion to the government of Attica, reformed the ſtate of juſtice and amended the condition of his ſubjects by many kingly regulations; before his time the people were diſperſed about the country in ſmall and ſeparated clans, more like the ſettlements of ſavages than a regular community; the police of courſe was very imperfect; the laws were merely local and arbitrary, nor did they generally agree in the ſame definition or diſtribution of juſtice; to remedy theſe evils he enlarged his capital, aſſembled the people from all parts, fixed them to a reſidence in Athens, and eſtabliſhed general courts of law and juſtice, where all his ſubjects might reſort to decide their properties, or compoſe their wrongs, by ſtated rules and inſtitutes, expounded and adminiſtered by judges competent to their vocation.

Theſe are ſervices beneficial to mankind, the actions of a patriot king and legiſlator, infinitely ſuperior to the extermination of

boars

boars or bulls, the unravelling a labyrinth, or conflicting with a wreſtler. One ſhould have thought that the rambling ſpirit of Theſeus might henceforward have ſubſided, and, if Hercules had not been upon earth, this would probably have been the caſe, and he would have deſcended to poſterity one of the greateſt characters in ancient hiſtory; but the expedition againſt the Amazons drew him out upon freſh and fooliſh adventures, and, though his friendſhip and his amours may have furniſhed pleaſing tales and fables to Heſiod and others, the hiſtorian will do well to paſs over this period of his life in ſilence and regret.

It ſuffices to relate that Meneſtheus took advantage of his abſence, and eſtabliſhed himſelf ſo firmly in power, that Theſeus on his return finding it impoſſible to diſpoſſeſs him of his uſurped authority retired to Scyros, and there either put a voluntary end to his life, or was deſtroyed by Lycomedes.

In the reign of Meneſtheus the famous ſiege of Troy, memorable to all ages, was undertaken by the joint forces of all the Grecian principalities: The combined fleets aſſembled

aſſembled at Athens, and took their final departure from that port: Agamemnon conducted a hundred ſhips from Mycenæ, Menelaus ſixty from Sparta, and Meneſtheus joined with fifty: The latter excelled all the generals of Greece, Neſtor only excepted, in military ſcience for arranging and diſpoſing troops in order of battle. Homer has left this teſtimony in his favour, and the authority is as indiſputable as the record is immortal; the town was taken in the laſt year of Meneſtheus's life and reign; he died in the iſland of Melos, and being one of the chiefs incloſed in the Trojan horſe, had a leading ſhare in the capture and deſtruction of that celebrated city.

" No chief like thee, Meneſtheus, Greece could yield,
" To marſhal armies in the duſty field,
" Th' extended wings of battle to diſplay,
" Or cloſe th' embodied hoſt in firm array;
" Neſtor alone, improv'd by length of days,
" For martial conduct bore an equal praiſe."

POPE.

No. CXVI.

THE expedition of the Greeks againſt Troy has ſupplied a ſubject to an heroic poem, which remains the wonder of all time and the unrivalled ſtandard of the epic art. It muſt be owned no poet ever made a happier choice, for what could be more intereſting to a Grecian reader, than the recital of an action founded in juſtice and terminated in ſucceſs? The event itſelf was magnificent; a coalition of the Grecian ſtates in vindication of an injured prince, who was one of their number. Had it recorded the expedition of one great monarch againſt another, it is eaſy to comprehend how much that brilliant variety of character, which now gives ſuch dramatic luſtre to the compoſition, would have loſt by the nature of ſuch a ſubject; whereas the emulation of the rival leaders conſtitutes that compound action, that ſtriking contraſt and diſcrimination of character, which render the Iliad ſo peculiar enchanting. The juſtice of the undertaking fortifies the

poet

poet with a moral, which ſecures the good opinion of his readers, and intereſts them cordially in his cauſe; it is ſo permanent a pledge for their good wiſhes, that it enables him to throw into the ſcale of the Trojans every epiſode of pity, every ornament of magnanimity and valour, which can beautify his poem, without the danger of creating falſe prejudices in behalf of the offenders; in ſhort, we can mourn for Hector and not regret the victory of Achilles.

If Homer found theſe incidents ready to his hands, their combination was ſupremely happy; if he created them, his invention was almoſt miraculous. The period at which he wrote was no leſs fortunate, being neither too remote to impair the intereſt of his ſubject, nor ſo near the time of the action as to confine his fancy to the limits of ſtrict hiſtorical truth. So wonderful an aſſemblage of parts meet in this great work, that there is not a paſſion in the human breaſt but will find its ruling intereſt gratified by the peruſal; and it is ſo happily contrived, that the combination of thoſe parts, multitudinous as they are, never violates the uniformity of deſign; the ſubject re-

mains ſimple and entire; our ideas never ſtray from the main object of the poem, though they are continually carried out upon excurſions through the regions of earth and heaven upon the ſtrongeſt pinions of fancy. The manner in which Homer employs his deities, with the machinery that accompanies them, gives an amazing brilliancy to the pictureſque and deſcriptive powers of the poem; the virtues, vices, prejudices, paſſions of thoſe imaginary beings ſet them on a level with human nature ſo far as to give us an intereſt in their ſituations, which a juſter repreſentation of ſuperior eſſences could not impart; while their immortality and power are engines in the poet's hand whoſe influence is unlimited by the laws of nature; theſe extraordinary perſonages, at the ſame time that they take a part very eſſential to the action of the drama, bring about the incidents by thoſe ſudden and ſupernatural means, which mortal heroes of the moſt romantic ſort could not ſo readily effect. This is an advantage on the part of a heathen poet, for which the Chriſtian writer has no ſubſtitute; for thoſe moderns, who in order to create ſur-

prize have invented capricious beings to produce extravagant events above the reach of human powers, and below the dignity of divine, violate our reaſon, whilſt they ſtruggle to amuſe our fancy; but the Pagan theoriſt can find a deity for every purpoſe without giving ſcandal to the believer, or revolting the philoſopher.

Amongſt the numberleſs excellencies of the Iliad there is none more to be admired than the correct preciſion, with which Homer draws his characters, and preſerves them uniformly through the poem; an excellence, in which Virgil and the Roman poets in general are greatly his inferiors: With Homer's heroes we have more than hiſtorical acquaintance, we are made intimate with their habits and manners, and whenever he withdraws them for a time, we are certain upon the next meeting to recognize and acknowledge the ſame characteriſtic traces that ſeparate each individual ſo decidedly from all others.—But it is time to return to our hiſtory.

After the death of Meneſtheus the crown of Athens returned into the family of Theſeus, and Demophon his ſon, who alſo was preſent

preſent at the ſiege of Troy, ſucceeded to his inheritance: Oxyntes, Aphidas, and Thymætes reigned in ſucceſſion after Demophon, and the line of the Erechthidæ expired in the perſon of Thymætes. This was a remarkable revolution, for that family had poſſeſſed the throne of Athens for a period of four hundred and twenty-nine years. The monarchy, properly ſo called, was now drawing to its concluſion; Melanthus, who ſucceeded to Thymætes, was a Meſſenian and a deſcendant from Neleus; he had been expelled from Meſſene by the Heraclidæ, and had taken refuge in the Athenian ſtate; he obtained the crown by very honourable means; Thymætes, being challenged to ſingle combat by Xanthus king of Bœotia, declined the challenge; Melanthus accepted it in his ſtead, ſlew Xanthus, and obtained the crown of Athens in reward for his ſucceſs; at his death it devolved to his ſon Codrus. The manner in which this prince devoted himſelf to death for his country ſcarce needs a recital, but it is not generally known that Codrus was in a very advanced age, when this event took place, and moreover that

the Athenians urged him to the deed upon the report of Cleomantis, a citizen of Delphi, who made them acquainted with the anſwer of the oracle touching the conditions, on which victory was to be obtained. The Athenians, having prevailed with Codrus to embrace the fatal conditions of their deliverance, ſacrificed their aged monarch, and impreſſed with the perſuaſion that Apollo would verify his prediction, fought and overcame their enemy.

Codrus being dead, the government of Athens underwent a material revolution, for the popular party, pretending a reſpect to his memory, put forward a decree prohibiting any other perſon to reign in Athens by the title of King; the change however for the preſent was more nominal than eſſential, for they did not alter the ſucceſſion, nor materially reduce the power of the monarchy. The Prince, or perpetual Archon, (for each title is uſed occaſionally) held the government for life, ſubject notwithſtanding to account to the ſtate for his adminiſtration of public affairs.

Medon, ſon of Codrus, ſucceeded to his father by this new title: Thirteen Princes

reigned under this deſcription from Medon to Alcmæon incluſive, comprehending a period of three hundred and ſeven years.

Some authorities maintain that Homer came to Athens in the time of Medon, and was hoſpitably received by that prince; but it is generally thought the age of Homer does not anſwer to this date, and that he was born about two hundred years after the ſiege of Troy; this falls within the time of Archippus, grandſon of Medon, and third perpetual archon; in the beginning of whoſe reign Heſiod was born; Homer ſome few years after at the cloſe of it: Archippus reigned nineteen years; and this æra ſeems eſtabliſhed by the beſt chronologiſts.

Archippus, at the concluſion of whoſe adminiſtration we have placed the birth of Homer, was ſucceeded by Therſippus, who held the government of Athens for a long incumbency of forty-one years, and he was ſucceeded by Phorbas, who was thirty years archon; in the period of theſe ſeventy-one years we have the Athenian æra of the life of Homer.

This however muſt in ſome degree be left to opinion, for before the inſtitution of the

Olympiads the Grecian chronicles are ſo vague and obſcure that the preciſe age of Homer will for ever remain a ſubject of conjecture. The above period has at leaſt the merit of holding a middle place between their opinions, who ſuppoſe he was born ſoon after the ſiege of Troy and ſuch as contend he was contemporary with Lycurgus. The late Mr. Robert Wood, in his eſſay on the original genius and writings of Homer, inclines to think the Iliad and Odyſſey were finiſhed about half a century after the capture of Troy; he has offered internal evidence in ſupport of this opinion in Homer's account of the family of Æneas, and his argument is acute and critical: They, who make him contemporary with Lycurgus, have internal evidence againſt them, which, though perhaps it does not ſerve to eſtabliſh Mr. Wood's poſition, certainly confutes the latter chronologiſts. Ariſtotle places Homer in the ſame epoch with Iphitus and the firſt Olympiad, but he reſts his conjecture upon the weakeſt of all arguments; whilſt the beſt authorities, as well as the majority in number, point to the period which I have ſuggeſted; and here for the preſent I will leave it.

The

The laſt but one of the perpetual archons was Æſchylus, and in the ſecond year of his government the Olympiads were firſt inſtituted by Iphitus at Elis; from this period we ſhall proceed with greater chronological preciſion.

The ſucceſſor of Æſchylus and the laſt of the perpetual archons was Alcmæon. The people of Athens had new-modelled their government upon the death of Codrus by aboliſhing the title of King, and reducing their chief magiſtrate to be in fact rather the firſt ſubject of the ſtate, than the monarch: This regulation appears to have been effected without any ſtruggle on the part of the reigning family; thirteen archons in ſucceſſion had been permitted to hold the government for life, when upon the expiration of Alcmæon's adminiſtration, the people thought fit by a freſh reform to limit the duration of the chief magiſtracy to the term of ten years, Charops, brother of Alcmæon and ſon of Æſchylus, was the firſt decennial archon; and this revolution took place in the firſt year of the ſeventh Olympiad. Whilſt the Athenian ſtate was by theſe ſteps enlarging its liberties, Romulus and Remus were forming the embryo of a

mighty empire fated in the courſe of time to become miſtreſs of the world; theſe adventurers collected a body of Latin ſhepherds, amongſt whom they had been educated, and, ſettling themſelves on the Palatine Mount, became the founders of Rome: This event is ſuppoſed to fall within the period of the ſeventh Olympiad, when Charops was decennial archon. It is generally ſuppoſed that this mighty empire was ſet in motion from one ſpark, which Greece had ſcattered from the conflagration of Troy, and which lighted on the ſhores of Italy, where it was kept alive for more than four centuries, till Rome was founded; but Æneas's Italian colonization is a very queſtionable point, and I am inclined to agree with Mr. Wood in his treatiſe abovementioned, that the poſterity of Æneas did not migrate into Italy, but eſtabliſhed themſelves in the Troade, and reigned over the ſcattered remains of the Trojans after the deſtruction of Ilium.

A revolution of eighteen Olympiads produced a third change in the conſtitution of the Athenian government in favour of popular freedom, by limiting the archons to one year, making the magiſtracy annual:

Neither

Neither was this all, for the command was no longer lodged in the hands of one perſon only, but of nine, the firſt of which was ſtiled by pre-eminence Archon, and from him the year had its name; the ſecond, intitled Baſileus, took charge of religious ceremonies, and the Polemarc, or third in office, had the conduct of military affairs, whilſt all civil and judicial buſineſs was referred to the council of the remaining ſix, called Theſmothetæ. None but pure Athenians of three deſcents could be choſen by lot into this council; an oath of office was adminiſtered to them publicly in the portico of the palace, purporting that they would execute the laws with juſtice and fidelity, and take no gifts either from their clients or the people at large. When they had performed their annual functions, and acquitted themſelves without impeachment, they were in courſe aggregated to the Areopagites, and held that dignity for life. Every thing relating to the care of orphans and widows, or the eſtates of minors, was veſted in the principal magiſtrate, properly ſtiled Archon; he had the charge of divorces and the ſuperintendance of the parents and

children of ſoldiers, who fell in battle, and of all ſuch citizens who were maintained at the public charge.

Of theſe annual archons, Creon was the firſt, and was elected about the twenty-fourth Olympiad.

No. CXVII.

THE Athenian ſtate continued to be governed by annual archons according to the alteration made in its conſtitution in the twenty-fourth Olympiad, without any thing occurring of importance to merit a recital from the time of Creon to the adminiſtration of Draco in the thirty-ninth Olympiad. The Athenians, having reduced the monarchical power to the moſt diminutive of all kingly repreſentatives, an annual archon, had to all appearance effectually eſtabliſhed their liberties; but it has been the fate of freedom to be turned into abuſe in all ages, and the licentiouſneſs of the people now ſeemed in more want of reform, than the prerogative of the king had been in the moſt arbitrary times. The moral purity of Draco's manners,

ners, and the ſtern inflexibility of his temper, fitted him for an office, that required both rigorous virtue and reſolute diſpatch, for his time was ſhort and his taſk laborious and full of danger: had his power been permanent, it is probable he would have qualified the ſeverity of thoſe famous laws, which from their ſanguinary nature were figuratively ſaid to be written in blood, and it is certain they breathe a ſpirit calculated rather for the extinction of ſociety, than for its reformation. We muſt however admit the difficulty of deviſing any code of penal ſtatutes, by which degrees of puniſhment ſhall be equitably proportioned to degrees of offence. We have no experience or hiſtory of any ſuch code now exiſting, or that ever did exiſt. A citizen of the world will not eſtimate crimes and offences by the ſame rule and ſtandard as a citizen of any one particular community will; local circumſtances will give fainter or deeper colourings to crimes according to the peculiar conſtitution of the ſtate, againſt which they are committed: The Athenians in the time of Draco were governed by annual magiſtrates; the adminiſtration of theſe

magiſtrates was made ſubject to popular enquiry upon its termination; they had expunged from their conſtitution the wholeſome though high-ſounding principle, that a king cannot do wrong; it was now become ſcarce poſſible that his ſubſtitute could do right; the people ſat in judgment on their governors, and many of the moſt virtuous citizens in the ſtate ſuffered under their ſentence: Fear reſtrained the timid from exertion, and the allurements of power debauched the intereſted and ambitious from their duty; whilſt the magiſtrate aimed at popularity, the people became intolerably licentious. The rigour of Draco impreſſes us with a high idea of his purity of principle; his abhorrence of the abuſes of his predeceſſors in office, and his indignation againſt the depravity of his fellow-citizens embittered his mind, and made him rather a miſanthrope, than a ſtateſman.

Draco ſeems to have conſidered the commiſſion of crimes, not in proportion to their offence againſt ſociety, but according to the principle of the criminal, holding a tranſgreſſor equally guilty, whether he broke the law in the leaſt tittle, or in its greateſt extent;

tent; for he puniſhed indiſcriminately with death in both caſes: In this there is as little wiſdom as mercy, and it is to the honour of Solon that he revoked ſuch undiſtinguiſhing and bloody laws. Juſtly to aſcertain and define the various degrees of human depravity is impracticable for thoſe who cannot ſearch the human heart; nor in the nature of things is it poſſible for any man or council of men, to form a ſyſtem of puniſhments to meet the ſeveral degrees and definitions of crimes with proportioned retribution: Sentence of death is at once the higheſt exertion of authority one fellow-creature can exerciſe over another and the heavieſt atonement any offender can make to the laws of that ſociety, in which he is inliſted: Draco excuſed himſelf from the charge of indiſcriminate rigour by pleading that he could deviſe no puniſhment greater than death; the nature of the plea gives an inſight into the character of the man, that needs no comment; it is plain however that he had no idea of aggravating death by tortures; he did not know, or would not practiſe, thoſe deteſtable arts and refinements, which now prevail in too many parts of the Chriſtian

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Chriſtian world, of extorting criminations and confeſſions by heightening the agonies of death. The ſhort duration of his authority, as I before obſerved, precipitated him upon this ſyſtem of ſeverity, which time and reflection would probably have corrected: A haſty reformer is equally to be dreaded with a deliberate tyrant; legal cruelty is of all moſt terrible; a law once made is made to be executed; the will of the judge cannot mitigate it, and the power of the ſovereign can only releaſe from puniſhment, but not apportion or modify it: Herein conſiſts the irreparable defect of all eſtabliſhed rules of fixed puniſhment; to include different degrees of criminality under one and the ſame degree of penalty is not ſtrict equity, but to live without laws at the arbitrary diſpoſal of any human tribunal is ſlavery of the moſt inſupportable ſort.

By Draco's laws an Athenian was equally guilty of death, whether he pilfered a cabbage or murdered a citizen: Horrible decree! If the principle of puniſhment does not conſiſt in revenging what is paſt, but in preventing the culprit from repeating and the community from ſuffering the like or any other

other offence from the ſame perſon, it may well be doubted if death need be inflicted in any caſe; the terror of example, not the ſpirit of revenge, muſt conſtitute the neceſſity of ſuch a mode of puniſhment, if any neceſſity exiſts; but if puniſhments may be deviſed, by which guilty perſons ſhall be made to atone to ſociety without cutting them from it, and if theſe puniſhments may be ſuch as ſhall deter and terrify the evil-minded equally with death itſelf, policy, independent of religion, will be intereſted to adopt them.

It was not to be expected that the Athenians would be remedied by ſuch ſanguinary laws as thoſe of Draco, and they had been in operation nearly half a century, when Solon, in the third year of the forty-ſixth Olympiad, found the people in as much need of reformation, as Draco did in the beginning of the thirty-fifth Olympiad.

Solon was of noble birth and of an elevated ſoul; he was a friend to liberty, but a lover of order; deſcended from Codrus, he was a patriot by inheritance; though he was a great adept in the philoſophy of the times, it neither ſoured his manners nor left

him

him without attention to the public. When he withdrew himſelf from the world for the purpoſes of ſtudy and contemplation, it was to render himſelf a more uſeful citizen on his return to ſociety: With a fortune rather below mediocrity he had ſuch a ſpirit of beneficence and generoſity, that he was obliged in his youth to apply himſelf to commerce to ſupport his independence: Solon's philoſophy did not boaſt any unnatural contempt of pain or pleaſure; he affected no apathy: on the contrary, when he was reproached for weeping at the death of his ſon, as if it was unbecoming of a wiſe man to bewail an evil he could not remedy, he anſwered with a modeſt ſenſibility of his weakneſs, that it was on that very account he did bewail it.

The anecdote Plutarch gives us of Solon's interview with his contemporary Thales, and the ſilly method that philoſopher took for convincing Solon of the advantages of celibacy by employing a fellow to make a falſe report to him of his ſon's death, heightens our affection for the man, without lowering our reſpect for the ſage: Thales in the true ſpirit of ſophiſm triumphed

umphed in the ſuperiority of his wiſdom by avoiding thoſe connections, which ſoften the human heart, and vainly ſuppoſed he ſunk the dignity of Solon's character by expoſing to ridicule the tender feelings of the father.

The Athenians were exhauſted by a tedious and unproſperous war with the people of Megara; the important iſland of Salamis was loſt, and ſuch was their deſpair of ever recovering it, that they paſſed a law for making it a capital offence in any citizen to propoſe the retaking it: Solon, who regarded this degrading edict with honeſt indignation, feigned himſelf inſane, and ruſhing into the forum harangued the populace, abrogated the edict and declared war againſt the Megarenſians: On this occaſion he addreſſed the people in elegiac verſes of his own compoſing, one hundred in number; the power of his muſe prevailed, for it was great; the people gave him the command of an expedition againſt Salamis, in which he had the good fortune to reduce that iſland and reannex it to his country, which had made ſuch public avowal of its deſpair.

Solon is ſo highly celebrated as a poet, that ſome antient authorities have equalled him

him to Heſiod and even to Homer: We have few and ſmall remains, but many teſtimonies of his writings; in particular we are informed, that he compoſed five thouſand verſes on the commonwealth of Athens, recording the tranſactions of his own time, not as a hiſtory in praiſe, but in defence of himſelf, and with a view to encourage his countrymen to perſiſt in a courſe of public virtue and private morality. He wrote iambics alſo and odes, and compoſed even his laws in verſe, of which Plutarch has quoted the exordium.

He employed ſtratagem in the reduction of the iſland of Salamis, but as the celebrated Piſiſtratus was joined with him in this enterprize, it muſt not be diſguiſed that ſome authorities give the ſucceſs of the expedition to Piſiſtratus; both were men of conſummate addreſs and reſource, and each no doubt had his ſhare of merit in the ſervice; the reputation Solon gained by this event was ſtill increaſed by his conduct in the defence of the famous temple of Delphi againſt the ſacrilegious Cirrhæans; though he was only aſſeſſor to the general Cliſthenes the Sicyonian in this campaign, the ſucceſsful

ceſsful termination of the war by the capture of Cirrha was univerſally attributed to Solon.

Athens was now rent by popular feuds and diſſentions; the commonwealth was in imminent peril, every thing tending to civil tumult and confuſion, and the people in a ſtate little ſhort of abſolute anarchy: In this extremity every eye was turned towards Solon, and he was elected archon by the general voice of his fellow-citizens. It was now not only in his power to make himſelf abſolute maſter of the ſtate, and to eſtabliſh that tyranny in his own perſon, which he lived to ſee Piſiſtratus aſpire to and obtain, but that ſtep was alſo preſſed upon him by the unanimous ſolicitation of his friends and the public at large; religion had its ſhare in the temptation, for the temple of Delphi uttered its oracular decree for his aſſuming the ſupreme power in Athens, and when he withſtood the dazzling offer, he had to combat the reproaches and invectives of all parties for refuſing it. A magnanimity that was proof againſt temptation was not to be ſhaken by calumny; ſupported by conſcious integrity he oppoſed the torrent, and contenting

tenting himſelf with the limited authority of an annual magiſtracy, framed and publiſhed thoſe mild and ſalutary ordinances, which have endeared his name to all poſterity. Amongſt the pacifying meaſures of his government he found it expedient to relieve the people by an ordinance for the remiſſion of debts of a certain deſcription; this act raiſed a ſtorm of oppoſition and abuſe from all the rich and uſurious againſt his adminiſtration, and ſome who had been his intimates took part in the faction, and began to perſecute him in the bittereſt manner, charging him with the meanneſs of exempting himſelf as a creditor from the conditions of the act; he ſoon turned the odium of the charge upon the contrivers of it, by giving public proof to the city that he himſelf had been the firſt who obeyed his own law, and remitted a conſiderable ſum to his debtors; this proof of his diſintereſtedneſs as a creditor convinced his countrymen of his uprightneſs as a legiſlator, and he roſe the higher in their eſteem for the malevolent attack he had ſo fully repulſed: Reaſon and public gratitude at length prevailed, and the voice of faction being put to ſilence,

the

the whole care of the commonwealth was ſurrendered into his hands to be regulated and reformed according to his wiſdom and diſcretion.

Solon, though too magnanimous to accept the title of king, was too good a citizen to decline the truſt, and now it was that he abrogated all Draco's ſanguinary laws, except thoſe that affected murderers: This, as I before obſerved, occurred in the courſe of the forty-ſixth Olympiad; he arranged the people into four claſſes according to the different proportions of their property; he erected the principal council of the Areopagites, with inferior courts for the adminiſtration of law and juſtice, and publiſhed his famous manifeſto for rendering infamous all perſons, who in civil ſeditions ſhould remain ſpectators of their country's danger by a criminal neutrality; he enacted many wholeſome regulations reſpecting marriages, tending to the increaſe of population; he ſuppreſſed libels, and made idleneſs puniſhable by law; he put under certain diſabilities, parents who were convicted of having groſsly neglected the education of their families,

and

and reſtrained by ſumptuary laws every ſpecies of public exceſs. Many more of his laws might be enumerated, if it were neceſſary to enlarge upon facts ſo generally known, but it will ſuffice to mention, that when he had completed his code, he bound the ſenators to the obſervance of what it contained by the ſolemneſt oath he could deviſe, and cauſing his laws to be engraven on tables of wood, hung them up in the public courts that no man might plead ignorance.

The nature of this oath is curious; the ſenator was led up to a ponderous ſtone preſerved in the forum; there the oath was publickly adminiſtered, and the obligation of it was, that he ſhould dedicate a piece of gold to the temple of Delphi of equal weight with the ſtone if he was proved guilty of having violated his oath: Not content with thus ſwearing the judges and ſenators to the faithful adminiſtration of his laws, he alſo bound the people by oath to their due obſervance, and having done all this with a temper and prudence, particularly expreſſive of his character, Solon took his leave of Athens and ſet out upon his travels into Egypt.

No. CXVIII.

ALTHOUGH the wiſdom and magnanimity of Solon are conſpicuous in every action of his life, which hiſtory has tranſmitted to us, nothing is more worthy of our admiration and praiſe than the circumſtance laſt recorded of his ſeceſſion from Athens.

It is not neceſſary to follow him in his travels, in which after ſome time ſpent in viſiting Egypt, Cyprus, and Lydia, he obeyed the ſummons of his fellow-citizens and returned to Athens: That city during his abſence had been diſtracted by furious and contending factions: Lycurgus headed one party, Megacles ſon of Alcmæon another, and Piſiſtratus was leader of a third, in which was included nearly the whole inferior order of the people: All theſe parties nevertheleſs preſerved a reſpect for their ancient benefactor and lawgiver, and he ſpared no pains in return, to aſſuage and compoſe the diſorders of the ſtate, but in vain; age indeed had not yet deprived him

of

of his mental faculties, but his corporeal ones were debilitated, and the criſis called for more activity than he was now capable of exerting; he could no longer ſpeak in public nor addreſs the people in the forum as he was accuſtomed to do; he tried his influence ſeparately and in private with the leaders of the ſeveral factions: Piſiſtratus, whoſe manners were of the gentleſt kind, affected to receive the advice and counſels of Solon with great external reſpect, but ambition had taken too firm hold of his heart, and he had laid his plans too deep to be diverted from them by the patriotic diſcourſes of this venerable citizen; the ſagacity of Solon penetrated his deſigns, and when he was convinced of his diſſimulation, and ſaw the liberties of his country on the point of being overthrown by this artful dæmagogue, he came into open court in military array, and preſented himſelf to the aſſembly ready to head the friends of their country, and expel Piſiſtratus by force of arms: The noble effort was too late, for the ſpirit of the people was loſt, and all men ſeemed diſpoſed to ſurrender themſelves without reſiſtance to the uſurper. Solon, finding that he could not

not rouſe them to a conſideration of their ancient dignity, nor inſpire them with a becoming ſenſe of the value of liberty, laid aſide his arms, and ſuſpending them at the door of the Court-houſe, took a ſhort but pathetic leave of Athens, and once again retired into voluntary baniſhment: Whither is not diſtinctly aſcertained; many preſſing invitations were addreſſed to him from different parts, and I am inclined to think he accepted that of Crœſus king of Lydia, and that he cloſed an illuſtrious life in extreme old age in the iſland of Cyprus. His aſhes, by his expreſs direction, were tranſported to his native iſland of Salamis and there depoſited. The Athenians erected his ſtatue in braſs, but Piſiſtratus revoked his laws: The laws of Draco, notwithſtanding their ſeverity, were in execution for a longer period than the mild and prudent ordinances of Solon. The people it is true never wholly forfeited their reſpect for this excellent perſon, but they were unworthy of him; even Piſiſtratus, amidſt the ſtruggles of ambition, offered no inſult to his perſon, and every country, which his fame had reached, preſented an aſylum to the venerable exile.

As an orator, Solon ſtands high in point

of merit, and firſt in order of time: As a poet, his genius was ſublime, various, and fluent; in ſubjects of fiction and fancy he never dealt; but, though he choſe his topics with the gravity of a ſtateſman, and handled them with the fidelity of an hiſtorian, he compoſed with ardour, and never failed to fire his hearers with the recitation of his poems: He is ſuppoſed to have reprobated the drama, but, if this be a fact, we may well conclude, that it was the old corrupt maſque of Bacchus and the Satyrs, of which he ſignified his diſlike, and in this he is warranted. In two expeditions, where he had a military command, he was eminently ſucceſsful, and gained a high degree of glory: No ſtateſman ever ſtood in times more perilous, no citizen ever reſiſted more alluring offers of ambition, and no legiſlator ever regulated a more diſorderly community: Though devoted to the ſtudy of philoſophy, and a great maſter in the early ſcience of the times, he mixed with chearfulneſs in ſociety, was friendly and convivial, and did not hold back from thoſe tender ties and attachments, which connect a man to the world, and which by ſome have been conſidered incompatible with a life devoted to

wiſdom and ſublime philoſophy: Strict in his morals as Draco, he was not like him diſpoſed to put criminals to death, whilſt there was any hope of conducting them by gentle meaſures to repentance: His modeſty was natural and unaffected, and though he was generally ſilent in company, his ſilence threw no damp upon feſtivity, for it did not ſavour of ſullenneſs, and he was known to be a friend to the uſe of wine with freedom, but without exceſs: At the meeting of the ſeven celebrated ſages (his contemporaries and colleagues in wiſdom) when they were entertained by Periander at Corinth, the golden ſalver, which the Mileſian fiſhermen had dragged out of the ſea in their net, and which the Delphic oracle upon reference of the controverſy had decreed to the wiſeſt man of the age, was by general ſuffrage given to Solon; each perſon, with becoming deference to the others, had ſeverally declined the prize, but Solon was at length conſtrained to receive it by concurrent vote of the whole aſſembly.

Hiſtorians are not agreed upon the exact time of Solon's departure from Athens, and ſome maintain that he continued there till

his death; this is not probable; but the reſult of the accounts puts it out of doubt that he remained there, whilſt there was any hope of compoſing the diſturbances of the ſtate, and of reſtoring its tranquillity and freedom, under the prudent regulations he had eſtabliſhed when he was Archon.

But no ſooner had this excellent citizen turned his back upon Athens, than all theſe hopes periſhed, and univerſal deſpair took place; the degeneracy of the people became incurable, and no one was found with authority or zeal to oppoſe the approaching revolution: Though Solon was far in the decline of life, yet if there had been any public virtue ſubſiſting, the liberty of Athens had not been loſt without a ſtruggle; but, although neutrality in civil commotions had been declared infamous and criminal by the laws of Solon, the populace through deſpair or indolence declined the conteſt, and held themſelves in readineſs to receive a maſter in either of the contending partiſans, who ſhould prevail over his competitors.

Fortune and ſuperior addreſs at length decided the prize of ambition to Piſiſtratus and his party, for he poſſeſſed every qualification

fication that could recommend him to the public; of inſinuating manners, with a beautiful and commanding perſon, he was gallant, eloquent, and munificent; no man acquitted himſelf more gracefully as a public ſpeaker, and when Pericles in aftertimes alarmed the jealouſy of the Athenians, the reſemblance he bore to Piſiſtratus in eloquence as well as in features was ſo ſtriking, that he was univerſally called the *Second Piſiſtratus*, and the comic poets in their ſatirical alluſions exhibited him on the ſtage by that name and character.

Whilſt theſe party ſtruggles were in ſuſpence, Piſiſtratus uſed an artifice for recommending himſelf to the people, which was deciſive in his favour: One day on a ſudden he ruſhed into the forum, where the citizens were aſſembled, as if he had been flying from aſſaſſins, who were in purſuit of him, and preſented himſelf to public view defaced with wounds, and covered with blood; he was mounted in his chariot, and the mules that drew him were ſtreaming with blood as well as himſelf: The crowd flocked around him, and in this ſituation without wiping his wounds or diſmounting from his chariot, he

harangued the forum; he told them he had that inſtant eſcaped from the aſſaſſinating ſwords of the nobles, who had cruelly attempted to deſtroy the man of the people for his activity in oppoſing the exactions of ſordid creditors and uſurious tyrants: His tears, his ſufferings, the beauty of his perſon now ſtreaming with blood, which he had ſpilt in their cauſe, his military ſervices at Megara, and his proteſtations of affection to the people, in whoſe defence he ſolemnly proteſted a determination to perſiſt or periſh, all together formed ſuch an addreſs to the paſſions, and preſented ſuch a picture to the eye, that were irreſiſtibly affecting.

Though it ſoon appeared in proof, that the whole was artifice, and that all theſe wounds about himſelf and his mules were of his own giving for the impreſſion of the moment, ſtill the moment ſerved his purpoſe, and in the heat of popular tumult he obtained a decree for granting him a body-guard, not armed as ſoldiers, but with ſticks and clubs: At the head of this deſperate rabble he loſt no time in forcing his way into the citadel, and took poſſeſſion

of

of it and the commonwealth in the ſame moment: He next proceeded to exile the moſt powerful and obnoxious of his opponents. Megacles and Lycurgus, with their immediate adherents, either fled from the city or were forcibly driven out of it; the revolution was compleat.

The tumult having ſubſided, Piſiſtratus began to look around him, and to take his meaſures for ſecuring himſelf in the authority he had ſeized: For this purpoſe he augmented his body-guard, which, as they were firſt voted to him, conſiſted only of fifty; theſe he endeavoured to attach to his perſon by liberal payments, and whilſt he equipt them at all points like ſoldiers, he put a cunning ſtratagem in practice, by which he contrived to ſeize all the private arms of the citizens and totally diſmantled Athens: He uſed leſs ceremony with the nobles, for he ſtripped them of all weapons of offence openly and by force; and now he found himſelf, as he believed, in ſafe poſſeſſion of the ſovereign power and throne of Athens.

This paſſed in the fifty-firſt Olympiad, when Comias was Archon.

It rarely happens that dominion, rapidly obtained, proves firmly eſtabliſhed. The factions of Megacles and Lycurgus were broken by this revolution, but not extinguiſhed, and Piſiſtratus either could not prevent their re-uniting, or perhaps overſecurity made him inattentive to their movements: He enjoyed his power for a ſhort time, and was in his turn driven out of Athens by thoſe he had exiled, and his effects were put up to public ſale, as the property of an outlaw.

Megacles and Lycurgus now divided the government between them; this was a ſyſtem that ſoon wrought its own overthrow; and Megacles, finding his party the weaker, invited Piſiſtratus to return to Athens, vainly imagining he could lull his ambition, and ſecure him to his intereſt by giving him his daughter Cæſyra in marriage. Piſiſtratus accepted the terms, and obeyed the welcome recal, but it was in ſuch a manner, as might have put the weakeſt man upon his guard, for his return and entrance into Athens were accompanied by one of the moſt barefaced attacks upon public credulity and ſuperſti-

tion,

tion, that is to be found in the hiſtory of man.

He had already ſucceeded in ſeveral hardy ſtratagems, and all had been diſcovered after they had ſerved his purpoſes. His pretended aſſaſſination, his contrivances for arming his body-guard and for diſarming the citizens at large, were all well known to the people, ſo that he muſt have taken a very nice meaſure of their folly and blindneſs, when, upon his entering the city, he undertook to bring in his train a woman, named Phæa, whom he dreſſed in the habit of the goddeſs Minerva, and impoſed her on the vulgar for their tutelar deity in perſon: He had inſtructed her how to addreſs the people in his behalf, commanding them to reinſtate him in his power, and open the gates of the citadel at his approach: The lady was ſufficiently perſonable for the character ſhe aſſumed, and, as a proof of her divinity, was of coloſſal ſtature: Extravagant as the experiment may ſeem, it ſucceeded in all points; the human deity was obeyed, and the ingenious demagogue carried all before him: This Grecian Joan of Arc received the adoration of the

ſuperſtitious vulgar in public, and the grateful careſſes of the exulting tyrant in private: The lady was not of very diſtinguiſhed birth and fortune, for before ſhe took upon her the character of a goddeſs ſhe condeſcended to the mortal occupation of a flower-girl, and made garlands after the cuſtom of the Greeks for feaſts and merry-makings: Piſiſtratus rewarded her liberally, by giving her in marriage to his ſon Hipparchus; a commodious reſource for diſpoſing of a caſt-off goddeſs; as for himſelf, he was engaged to Cæſyra: Phæa's marriage with Hipparchus ſoon convinced the world that ſhe was a mortal, but Piſiſtratus gave himſelf no concern to prevent the diſcovery; in proceſs of time it came to paſs, upon Piſiſtratus's ſecond expulſion, that Phæa was publicly impeached and condemned upon the charge of *læſæ Majeſtatis*.

No. CXIX.

PISISTRATUS had been five years in exile, when Megacles brought about his recal, and vainly thought to fix him in his intereſt by giving him his daughter Cæſyra in marriage; ſuch alliances rarely anſwer the political ends for which they are made: Piſiſtratus had ſeveral ſons by his firſt wife, and having re-eſtabliſhed himſelf in the tyranny after the manner we have been deſcribing, and beſtowed his favourite Phæa upon his ſon Hipparchus, he took the daughter of Megacles as the condition of his contract with her father, but with a fixed determination againſt a ſecond family, whoſe pretenſions might come in competition with thoſe of his children by his firſt marriage, in whoſe favour he wiſhed to ſecure the ſucceſſion, and who, both by age and capacity, were fit for government, whenever it ſhould devolve upon them.

Cæſyra put up with her huſband's neglect for ſome time, but at length ſhe imparted her diſguſt to her mother, and ſhe of courſe

communicated it to Megacles. Juſtly offended by the indignity of ſuch treatment, Megacles immediately took his meaſures with the enemies of his ſon-in-law for his ſecond expulſion, prudently diſguiſing his reſentment, till he was in a condition to put it in force: It did not long eſcape the penetration of Piſiſtratus, but when he came to the knowledge of the conſpiracy that had been formed againſt his power, he found himſelf and party too weak to oppoſe it, and ſeizing the hour of ſafety, made a voluntary abdication by retiring into Eretria without a ſtruggle, and in the utmoſt precipitation.

Megacles and his friends ſeem to have conſidered this ſeceſſion of Piſiſtratus as deciſive, or elſe the time did not allow them to follow it by any active meaſures for preventing his return: Eleven years however paſſed, and ſtill he remained an exile from Athens; old as he was, his ambition does not ſeem to have cooled, nor was he idle in the interim; he had an interview with his ſons in Eretria, and concerted meaſures with them for his reſtoration; he formed alliances with ſeveral of the Grecian cities, particularly

Thebes

Thebes and Argos, and obtained a ſeaſonable ſupply of money, with which he enliſted and took into his pay a conſiderable army of mercenaries, and began hoſtilities in the Athenian ſtate by ſeizing upon Marathon. This ſucceſsful meaſure drew out many of his ſecret partiſans from Athens to join him in this place, where the promiſing aſpect of his affairs and the popularity of his character, had induced great numbers to reſort to his ſtandard: Thus reinforced he put his army in motion, and directed his march towards the city. The ruling party at Athens haſtily collected troops to oppoſe his approach, and put them under the command of Leogaras, who no ſooner took the field againſt Piſiſtratus, than he ſuffered himſelf and army to be ſurprized by that experienced general, and fled in diſorder over the country; the politic conqueror ſtopped the purſuit, and diſpatched his ſons after the fugitives to aſſure them of pardon and protection, if they would go back to their homes and reſume their occupations in peace like good citizens: Piſiſtratus was far advanced in age, and having carried this deciſive action by ſtratagem, took every

prudent

prudent precaution for eſtabliſhing his advantage, by ſeizing the ſons of the leading partiſans in oppoſition to his government, and detaining them in cloſe cuſtody as hoſtages for the peaceable behaviour of their parents. He conducted himſelf on the occaſion with ſo much temper and judgment, the ſplendor of his talents and the elegance of his manners reflected ſo much luſtre on his court and country, that his uſurpation was either no longer remembered, or remembered without averſion and regret; in ſhort, his genius for government was ſuch that no man queſtioned his right: Even Solon, with all his zeal for liberty, pronounced of Piſiſtratus, that Athens would not have contained a more virtuous citizen, had his ambition been directed to a more juſtifiable purſuit: He was mild and merciful in the extreme, winning in addreſs, an eloquent orator, a juſt judge, and a munificent ſovereign; in a word, he had either the merit of poſſeſſing, or the art of diſſembling, every good quality and every brilliant accompliſhment.

Having now brought down this brief recapitulation of the Athenian hiſtory to the laſt

laſt period of the reign of Piſiſtratus, we are arrived at the point of time, in which that remarkable æra commences, which I call *The Literary age of Greece*: It was now that Piſiſtratus conceived the enlarged and liberal idea of inſtituting the firſt public library in Greece, and of laying it open to the inſpection and reſort of the learned and curious throughout the kingdoms and provinces of that part of the world—*Libros Athenis diſciplinarum liberalium publice ad legendum præbendos primus poſſuiſſe dicitur Piſiſtratus tyrannus.* (Aul. Gell. cap. xvii. lib. vi.)—— Through a long, though interrupted, reign of three and thirty years, he had approved himſelf a great encourager of literature and a very diligent collector of the works of learned men: The compiler of the ſcattered rhapſodies of Homer, and the familiar friend of the great epic poet Orpheus of Croton (author of the Argonautics) he was himſelf accompliſhed in the learning of the age he lived in; and, whilſt his court became a place of reſort for contemporary genius, he puſhed his reſearches after the remains of the ancient poets and philoſophers through every ſpot, where the liberal ſciences had been known

known to flouriſh; collecting books in Ionia, Sicily, and throughout all the provinces of Greece with much coſt and diligence; and having at length compleated his purpoſe, and endowed a library with the treaſures of the time, he laid it open to all readers for the edification of mankind—*Who of thoſe times ſurpaſſed him in learning* (ſays Cicero) *or what orator was more eloquent or accompliſhed than Piſiſtratus, who firſt diſpoſed the works of Homer in that order of compilation we have them at this very time? (De Orat.* iii. 137.)

The inſtitution of this library forms a ſignal epoch in the annals of literature, for from this period Attica took the lead of all the provinces of Greece in arts and ſciences, and Athens henceforward became the ſchool of philoſophers, the theatre of poets, and the capital of taſte and elegance, acknowledged to a proverb throughout the world. From this period to the death of Menander the comic poet, an illuſtrious ſcene preſents itſelf to our obſervation. Greece, with unbounded fertility of genius, ſent a flood of compoſitions into light, of which, although few entire ſpecimens have deſcended to poſterity,

rity, yet theſe with ſome fragments, and what may be further collected on the ſubject from the records of the ſcholiaſts and grammarians, afford abundant matter for literary diſquiſition.

It is painful in the extreme to reflect upon the ravages of time, and to call to mind the hoſt of authors of this illuminated age, who have periſhed by the irruptions of the barbarous nations. When we meditate on the magnificence of the ancient buildings of Greece and Rome, the mind is ſtruck with awe and veneration; but thoſe impreſſions are of a very melancholy caſt, when we conſider that it is from their preſent ruins we are now meaſuring their paſt ſplendor; in like manner from a few reliques of ancient genius, we take a mournful eſtimate of thoſe prodigious collections, which, till the fatal conflagrations at Alexandria, remained entire, and were without compariſon the moſt valuable treaſure upon earth.

Piſiſtratus, as we have obſerved, eſtabliſhed the firſt public library in Greece; Xerxes plundered Athens of this collection, much augmented by the literary munificence of Hipparchus and the ſucceeding Archons:

Xerxes

Xerxes was not, like the barbarians of the lower ages, inſenſible to the treaſure he had poſſeſſed himſelf of; on the contrary, he regarded theſe volumes as the moſt ſolid fruits of his expedition, and imported them into Perſia, as ſplendid trophies of his triumph on his return. Seleucus, ſirnamed Nicanor, afterwards reſtored this library to Athens with a princely magnanimity. The kings of Pergamus alſo became great collectors, and the Pergamæan library grew into much reputation and reſort. But of all the libraries of antiquity that collected at Alexandria by the Ptolemies of Egypt was much the moſt reſpectable. Athenæus ſays (p. 3.) that Ptolemy Philadelphus purchaſed the Pergamæan library, and in particular the books collected by Nileus, principally conſiſting of the Greek dramatiſts, which with what he got at Athens and Rhodes, furniſhed the great library at Alexandria with forty thouſand volumes. This library was unhappily ſet on fire, when Julius Cæſar found it neceſſary to burn his ſhips in the docks at Alexandria; ſo Plutarch ſtates the caſe; but Aulus Gellius ſays they were ſet on fire accidentally by the auxiliary

liary troops—*non ſponte, neque opera conſulta, ſed a militibus forte auxiliariis incenſa ſunt.*—This misfortune was in a great meaſure repaired by the library which Marc Antony preſented to Cleopatra, and by ſubſequent additions was encreaſed to ſuch an amount, that when it was at laſt irretrievably deſtroyed by the Caliph Omar, it conſiſted of ſeven hundred thouſand volumes.

This amazing repoſitory of ancient ſcience was buried in aſhes by the well-known quibbling edict of that barbarous fanatic—*If*, ſaid the Caliph, *theſe volumes contain doctrines conformable to the Koran, then is the Koran alone ſufficient without theſe volumes; but, if what they teach be repugnant to God's book, then is it fitting they were deſtroyed.*—Thus, with falſe reaſon for their judge, and falſe religion for their executioner, periſhed an innumerable company of poets, philoſophers, and hiſtorians, with almoſt every thing elegant in art and edifying in ſcience, which the moſt illuminated people on earth had in the luxuriancy of their genius produced. In vain did the philoſopher John of Alexandria intercede to ſave them; univerſal condemnation to the flames was the ſentence ignorance denounced

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ed againſt theſe literary martyrs. The flow of wit, the flights of fancy, and the labours of learning, alike contributed to feed the fires of thoſe baths, in which the ſavage conquerors recreated themſelves after the ſiege. Need we inquire when art and ſcience were extinct, if darkneſs overſpread the nations? It is a period too melancholy to reflect upon and too vacant to record. Hiſtory paſſes over it, as over the chart of an ocean without a ſhore, with this cutting recollection accompanying it, that in this ocean are buried many of the brighteſt monuments of ancient genius.

It appears that at the time Terence was writing, Rome was in poſſeſſion of two thouſand Greek comedies; of all which, *væ barbaris!* not one hath deſcended to us, except what are found in our ſcanty volume of Ariſtophanes, and theſe are partly of the old perſonal claſs. The gleanings of a few fragments from the grammarians and ſcholiaſts, with the tranſlations of the Roman ſtage, are now the only ſamples of the Greek comedy in its laſt purity and perfection. It is true that writers of the lower ages, and even the fathers of the Chriſtian church, have quoted liberally from the new comedy of the

the Greeks; theſe fragments are as reſpectable for their moral caſt, as for their elegant turn of expreſſion; but what a poignancy do they give to our regret, when we compute the loſs poſterity has ſuffered by the ſcale of theſe remains!

On the part of tragedy, although very many noble works have periſhed, yet as ſome ſpecimens of the great maſters have come down to us entire, we have more to conſole us in this than in the comic department. Happily for the epic muſe, the rage of ignorance could not reach the immortal poems of Homer: What other compoſitions of that great bard may have been loſt to the world is but a dark inquiry at the beſt; many poems of an antecedent, and ſome of a contemporary date, have undoubtedly been deſtroyed; but I am inclined to think, that from the time when thoſe wonderful productions of the Iliad and Odyſſey were collected and made public at Athens till the Auguſtan æra, little was attempted in the epic branch.

CXX.

BY reviſing what hiſtory has delivered of the firſt poets of Greece, we ſhall be able to form a very tolerable conjecture of the authors, whoſe works Piſiſtratus collected at the time he inſtituted his library in Athens; but before I undertake this, it is proper to remark that ſome authorities, ancient as well as modern, have aſcribed the honour of compiling Homer's rhapſodies to Hipparchus the ſon of Piſiſtratus, and not to Piſiſtratus himſelf: I am not willing therefore to paſs over the queſtion without ſome explanation of it.

The ancient authorities I allude to are thoſe of Plato in his Hipparchus, and Ælian in the ſecond article of his eighth book: The firſt is a naked aſſertion; the ſecond ſets forth more circumſtantially—*That Hipparchus the ſon of Piſiſtratus was the firſt, who brought Homer's poems to Athens, and made the rhapſodiſts rehearſe them in the general aſſembly of the Grecian ſtates*—But this author, who is generally a faithful though

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a minute collector of ancedotes, expreſsly contradicts himſelf in the fourteenth article of the thirteenth book, and tells us that Piſiſtratus compiled the Iliad and Odyſſey of Homer: Cicero in the quotation from his Orator, mentioned in a preceding paper, gives the credit of the work to Piſiſtratus; Suidas under the article of Homer ſays—*That various perſons were at the pains of collecting and arranging theſe books in ſucceeding times, but of theſe Piſiſtratus of Athens was the firſt.*—Euſtathius in his commentary on the Iliad concurs in the ſame teſtimony; he ſays—*That the grammarians who compiled the Iliad, did it, as it is ſaid, by command of Piſiſtratus; that they corrected it at diſcretion, and that the principal of theſe was Ariſtarchus, and next to him Zenodotus. (Comm. ad Iliad, lib. 1.)* In this latter particular the learned commentator has fallen into an error; for it is well known that the celebrated critic Ariſtarchus, as well as Zenodotus, lived many years after the time of Piſiſtratus: I ſhall mention only one authority more on the ſame ſide of the queſtion, which I take to be more deciſive than any of the foregoing, and this is an ancient epigrammatiſt, who

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in a diſtich upon a ſtatue of Piſiſtratus celebrates him on this very account, and gives a very probable conjecture, that this ſtatue was erected in commemoration of the great work of the above-mentioned compilation. (*Anthol. lib.* iv. *cap.* iv.)

From theſe authorities, as well as from ſtrength of circumſtance, it ſeems highly probable that the founder of the firſt public library ſhould be ſtudious to enrich his collection with the poems of the Iliad and Odyſſey.

This important work was both extremely difficult to execute, and attended with very conſiderable expence in the progreſs of it. The rhapſodies of Homer were ſcattered up and down amongſt the cities of Greece, which the itinerant poet had viſited, and were neceſſarily in a very mutilated ſtate, or recorded in men's memories after an imperfect manner and by piecemeal only: In ſome places theſe ineſtimable reliques had been conſumed by fire; and in the lapſe of time it is natural to ſuppoſe they had ſuffered many injuries by accident, and not a few by interpolation. Solon himſelf is accuſed of having made inſertions in favour of

of the Athenians for political purpoſes. Nothing but the moſt timely exertions could have reſcued them from oblivion, and Piſiſtratus by reſtoring Homer has juſtly made his own name the companion of the poet's in immortality: To his ardour we are indebted for their preſent exiſtence. Underſtanding that there were rhapſodiſts, who went about the ſeveral Grecian ſtates reciting, ſome an hundred, ſome a thouſand lines in detached paſſages of the Iliad and Odyſſey, he cauſed public proclamation to be made of his deſign to collect thoſe famous poems, offering a reward to every man, who ſhould bring him any fragment to aſſiſt his intended compilation, and appointing proper perſons to receive their reſpective contributions. The reſort on this occaſion ſoon became prodigious; Piſiſtratus however, ſtill intent upon the work, adhered to his conditions, and let no man go away without his reward, though the ſame paſſages had been furniſhed ever ſo often by others before him: The inſpectors of the work by theſe means had an opportunity of collating one with the other, and rejecting what appeared ſpurious upon collation: This

was an office of great delicacy, and the ableſt men of the time were ſelected for that purpoſe, with liberal allowances for their trouble; they were many in number, and when each had made his ſeparate collection, and the rhapſodiſts ceaſed to come in, Piſiſtratus cauſed them all to aſſemble and produce their ſeveral copies for general review: The whole was now arranged according to the natural order of the poems, and in that order ſubmitted to the final ſupervifion of two perſons, who were judged moſt competent: The poem, thus compiled and corrected according to their judgment and diſcretion, was fairly tranſcribed, and the copy with great ſolemnity depoſited in the library: Had the like care been extended to the *Margites* and the reſt of Homer's poems, the world would probably have now been in poſſeſſion of them alſo; and it is fair to conclude from the circumſtance of their extinction, that both the Iliad and Odyſſey would have ſhared the ſame fate, had not this event ſo happily taken place under the patronage of Piſiſtratus. Let us mark this æra therefore as the moſt important in the annals of literature, and let every man,

man, who admires the genius of Homer, revere the memory of Piſiſtratus.

Lycurgus we know brought Homer's poems out of Aſia, and diſperſed them amongſt his countrymen at Lacedæmon; but Lycurgus conſidered theſe poems as a collection of maxims moral and political; he knew the influence, which poetry has over rude uncivilized tempers, and the ſame reaſons, that engaged him to employ the ſongs of Thales the Cretan in his firſt preludes towards a conſtitution of government, led him to adopt and import the epic poems of the Iliad and Odyſſey: He ſaw they were of a ſublime and animating caſt, inſpiring principles of religion, love of our country, contempt of death, and every heroic virtue, that can dignify man's nature; that they manifeſted to Greece what misfortunes attended the diſunion of her powers, and what thoſe powers were capable of performing, when united; he wiſhed to ſee an indiſſoluble alliance and compact of all the ſtates of Greece for their common glory and defence, but he wiſhed to ſee the ſtate of Sparta, like the ſons of Atreus, at the head of the league: In all theſe particulars the

poems of Homer fully met his wiſhes and fell in with his views, and as he had made his obſervations on the manners and characters of the Aſiatics during his travels amongſt them, he perſuaded himſelf the time might come, when the united arms of Greece would again prevail over the nations of the Eaſt, eſpecially when the natural bravery of the Greeks was ſtimulated by an heroic poem ſo flattering to their country and ſo encouraging to their hopes.

Piſiſtratus on the other hand was actuated by no ſuch public principles; but, though he had not a patriotic, yet he had an elegant mind, and the ſame love of learning, which had dictated the thought of erecting a public repoſitory for ſuch works of genius as were worthy to be preſerved, inſpired him with the ambition of being the editor of Homer's ſcattered remains: This never once occurred to the Spartan legiſlator, who valued them not as poems, but as precepts, in which light they were no leſs beneficial in their ſeparated ſtate than when co:nplete.

The Athenian tyrant contemplated them with the eye of a critic, and perceiving they would make the ſublimeſt and moſt perfect compilation

compilation the world had ever ſeen, he uſhered them into it with all the paſſion of an enthuſiaſt: As he evidently perceived they inculcated no doctrines inimical to monarchy, on the contrary that they recommended acquieſcence under rule and obedience to diſcipline, he obliged the rhapſodiſts to rehearſe them publicly in the ears of Greece at the great feſtival of the Panathenæa.

The publication of Homer's poems in this ſtate of perfection was the cauſe that produced ſuch a flow of compoſitions, eſpecially in the dramatic line; for, as I before obſerved, it operated to the diſcouragement of epic writing, and few inſtances of any poems under that deſcription occur after the compilation of the Iliad and Odyſſey: Men of genius are not eaſily diſpoſed to imitate what they deſpair of equalling, and the contemplation of a perfect work in any branch of compoſition will of courſe deter other adventurers from inferior attempts.

The drama was now in its dawn, and had made ſome advances before the compilation of the Iliad and Odyſſey, but it received ſuch improvement from thoſe poems, that

it is generally aſſerted, and by Ariſtotle amongſt others, to have derived its origin from Homer; in the further progreſs of theſe papers I ſhall fully examine how that queſtion ſtands, for the preſent it will be my purpoſe to take a review of the ſtate of literature in Greece at this remarkable period, when Piſiſtratus founded his library in Athens; a diſquiſition, which, although it will carry us into times of very remote antiquity and of doubtful hiſtory, will I hope prove not devoid of entertainment even to ſuch of my readers, as have not habituated themſelves to ſtudies of this nature.

It is for the ſake of ſuch, and in juſtice to the opinion I would wiſh to impreſs of the amiable character of Piſiſtratus, that I ſubjoin to this paper ſome explanation of the term *Tyrant*, by which, in conformity to hiſtory, I have been obliged to denominate him: The word, according to our conſtruction of it, conveys the moſt odious idea, but when it was applied to Piſiſtratus it was a title of royalty and not a term of reproach: In the age of Homer, Heſiod, and the Greek poets of that date, the word was not in uſe; they

they uſed no term but *Baſileus*, which they applied even to the crueleſt of deſpots, as the learned reader may be convinced of, if he will conſult the Odyſſey, (*Rhap. E.* 84.) This is a point of criticiſm ſo well agreed upon by all philologiſts, that the Hymn to Mars, which ſome have attributed to Homer, is by internal evidence now fully convicted of being poſterior to him, becauſe the term *Tyrannus* is found in it. The word is ſaid to be derived from the Tyrrhenians, and to have come into uſe about the age of Archilochus, who flouriſhed in the eighteenth Olympiad, many years ſubſequent to Homer and prior to Piſiſtratus, at which time, (viz. the age of Archilochus) Gyges, Tyrant of Lydia, was the firſt ſo entitled: For this we have the authority of Euphorion, a writer born in the cxxvi Olympiad, and librarian to Antiochus the Great, king of Syria; alſo of Clemens the hiſtorian, (*Strom.* 1.)

No. CXXI.

I now propoſe to review the ſtate of literature in Greece antecedent to the time when Piſiſtratus founded his library in Athens.

Letters, or the alphabet, were probably imported into Greece from Phœnicia: This is aſcribed to the poet *Linus*; this poet, according to the fabulous taſte of the times, was of divine origin, being reputed the ſon of Apollo by Terpſichore, according to other accounts of either Mercury, or Amphimarus, by Urania: If in a pedigree ſo doubtful we may chuſe for ourſelves, Mercury, as inventor of the lyre, ſeems to have a preferable claim to Amphimarus or Apollo, for Linus is ſaid to have been the father of lyric poetry; he is alſo recorded as the inſtructor of Hercules in letters, but if the elder Orpheus was alſo his diſciple, he muſt have been of too early an age to have been contemporary with Hercules, for Orpheus is placed eleven ages before the ſiege of Troy. Hercules may have been inſtructed

inſtructed by the Theban Linus, who was conſiderably junior to this of Chalcedon; Linus of Thebes was the ſon of the poet Eumolpus, and imparted to Greece the knowledge of the globes; he alſo before the time of Heſiod compoſed a poem, in which he gives the genealogy of the deities; all we know reſpecting it is that it differs in ſome particulars from Heſiod's Theogony: He paid dearly for the honour of being Hercules's preceptor, for that deified hero put Linus to death; though he gave the genealogy of the heathen gods, he is ſuppoſed to have taught a ſublimer doctrine of the Unity of the Supreme Being.

Of the name of *Orpheus* grammarians reckon no fewer than five epic poets; their hiſtories are involved in fable, and their diſtinctions uncertain and obſcure. The Thracian Orpheus, who is the elder of the name, is ſaid to have been the diſciple of Linus, and to have lived before the Trojan war eleven ages: He was a prophet as well as a poet, and inſtituted many ceremonies in the Pagan theology; he delivered precepts in verſe relative to the modes of initiation: The myſterious rites of Ceres and

Bacchus are ſuppoſed to have originated with him, but as it is pretty clear that theſe rites were Egyptian, they might be introduced, but not invented, by Orpheus.

The ſecond Orpheus was ſirnamed Ciconæus or Arcas, and was alſo of Thracian extraction; he is ſaid to have flouriſhed two generations before the ſiege of Troy; he alſo was an heroic poet and wrote fables and hymns addreſſed to the deities. Orpheus Odryſius and Orpheus Camarinæus were epic poets, but he, who was ſirnamed Crotoniates, was contemporary with Piſiſtratus, and lived in great favour and familiarity at the Athenian court; he is ſaid to have written the Argonautics, the hymns and the poems *de Lapidibus* now in our hands.

The antients, in the true ſpirit of fable, aſcribed miraculous powers to the harmony of Orpheus's lyre, and almoſt all the Roman poets have echoed his praiſes in the ſame fanciful ſtrain. Ovid gives us a liſt of foreſt trees that danced to his lyre, as long as a gardener's calendar: (*Metam. fab.* 2. *lib.* 10.) Seneca in his *Hercules Furens* gives him power over woods, rivers, rocks, wild beaſts

beaſts and infernal ſpirits *(Herc. Fur.* 569.) Horace adds to theſe the winds, and Manilius places his lyre amongſt the conſtellations, having enumerated all his ſupernatural properties in the following ſhort but comprehenſive and nervous deſcription,

At lyra diductis per cœlum cornibus inter
Sidera conſpicitur, quâ quondam ceperat Orpheus
Omne quod attigerat cantu; maneſque per ipſos
Fecit iter, domuitque infernas carmine leges.
Huic ſimilis honos, ſimiliſque potentia cauſæ:
Tunc ſilvas et ſaxa trahens, nunc ſidera ducit,
Et rapit immenſum mundi revolubilis orbem.

MANIL.

Of the name of *Muſæus* there were alſo ſeveral poets; the elder, or Athenian Muſæus, ſon of Antiphemus, was the ſcholar of Orpheus. The poetry of theſe antient bards was chiefly addreſſed to the ſervices of religion; their hymns were chaunted as parts of divine worſhip, and the power of divination was aſcribed to them, as the natural tribute of a barbarous multitude to men of ſuperior and enlightened talents: The knowledge of ſimples, and their uſe in healing diſeaſes or wounds, was amongſt the arts by

which theſe early benefactors to mankind attracted the reverence of the vulgar, and Muſæus is ſaid to have compoſed a poem on the cure of diſeaſes: This Muſæus was the father of Eumolpus, and it will be found by them, who have curioſity to ſearch into the records of theſe antient bards, that the great prerogatives of prophet and poet deſcended regularly through certain families after the manner of the Eaſtern and Jewiſh caſts. *Eumolpus*, who was of this family, beſides the hymns and verſes he compoſed upon the myſteries of Ceres and Bacchus, poſſeſſed the art of divination by inſpection of the human palm; an art of Egyptian origin.

Thamyris, the ſon of Philammon, is reckoned amongſt the epic poets who flouriſhed before the time of Homer: He compoſed a long poem, conſiſting of nearly three thouſand lines, intitled The Theology; but as this could not be denominated an epic poem, and as no record remains of any compoſition of his in that branch of poetry, it is a great doubt whether it is not owing to the fictions of the early grammarians, who were induſtrious to detract from the originality of Homer's

Homer's epic, that Thamyris and ſo many others are enumerated under that deſcription of poets antecedent to Homer; for ſome accounts make Thamyris the eighth epic poet prior to Homer, an authority to which no credit ſeems due.

Marſyas and *Olympus* are ſuppoſed to have lived in the time of the Argonautic expedition, but they, as well as *Amphion*, are more celebrated for their muſical talents and inventions, than for their ſkill in poetry: Of *Demodocus*, *Phemius* and *Aſbolus* the Centaur, ſuppoſed to have been poets antecedent to Homer, I find no particulars.

The exact time, in which *Heſiod* lived, as referred to the age of Homer, remains a point of controverſy in the chronology of the poets: They, who give credit to the verſes he is by ſome ſuppoſed to have written in competition with Homer, muſt place him as his contemporary; the beſt authorities fix him in a period ſomewhat antecedent to Homer's; Aulus Gellius inclines to the opinion of Heſiod being poſterior to Homer, but Ariſtophanes, in his comedy of The Frogs, places Homer in order of time after Heſiod: He introduces the poet Æſchylus

chylus reciting the praiſes of Orpheus in the firſt place, ſecondly of Muſæus, thirdly of Heſiod, and laſtly of Homer, which order of placing them the old ſcholiaſt interprets to apply to the times, in which they lived; the paſſage is as follows:

" The holy rites of worſhip Orpheus taught,
" And warned me to abſtain from human blood:
" In divination and the healing arts
" Muſæus was my maſter: Heſiod gave
" The uſeful leſſon how to till the earth,
" And mark'd the ſeaſons when to ſow the grain,
" And when to reap; but Homer, bard divine!
" Gods, to what heighth he ſoars, whilſt he arrays
" The warrior bright in arms, directs the fight,
" And with heroic virtue fires the ſoul!"

(ARISTOPH. FROGS.)

The bards of the Orphean family and others of high antiquity employed their talents in compoſing hymns and offices of devotion; and it is natural that ſuch ſhould be the firſt uſe and application of the powers of poetry; the reaſon is good on both ſides why there ſhould in all times have ſubſiſted an alliance between poetry and prayer. Metre aids and is adapted to the memory; it accords to muſic, and is the vehicle of enthuſiaſm; it makes the moral doctrines

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of religion more ſublime, and the myſterious ones more profound; it can render truth more aweful, and ſuperſtition more impoſing: If the eaſtern nations have ſet apart a language for their prieſts, and dedicated it as ſacred to the purpoſes of prayer, we may well believe that the antient heathen bards, who were chiefly Aſiatic Greeks, performed religious rites and ceremonies in metre, with accompaniments of muſic, to which they were devoted in the extreme: The hymns of David and the patriarchal prophecies were in metre, and ſpeak for themſelves; we have the ſame authority for knowing that the Chaldean worſhip was accompanied with muſic; the fact does not need illuſtration; the divinations of Muſæus and the hymns of Orpheus were of the ſame character; initiations were performed, oracles were delivered and even laws promulgated in verſe: The influence of poetry over the human heart is coeval with it, not limited by time or country, but univerſal to the world in all its parts and all its periods; it is the language of rapture, ſprings with invention and flows with devotion; the enthuſiaſt in love or glory breaks forth into it ſpontaneouſly,

and

and the voice of lamentation, attuned by ſenſibility, falls naturally into numbers.

When I am ſpeaking of the Oracular Poets, or Diviners, it is not poſſible to paſs over the *Sybills*, the moſt extraordinary in this order of bards; their oracles have been agitated by the learned in all ages, and received with the utmoſt veneration and reſpect by the Greeks firſt, and afterwards by the Romans: Heathen writers, and ſome of the firſt and moſt reſpectable fathers of the Chriſtian Church refer to them without heſitation, and the fact of their exiſtence reſts upon ſuch ſtrength of teſtimony, as ſeems to amount to hiſtorical demonſtration and univerſal aſſent. It appears that the Delphic and Erythrean Sybills, who were the oldeſt of the name, lived before the Trojan war: The verſes of the Erythrean Sybill, foretelling the coming of Chriſt, are ſeriouſly referred to by Euſebius and St. Auſtin; they are thirty-three in number, and now in our hands. She, who was ſuppoſed to have offered the nine volumes of oracles to Tarquinius Priſcus at Rome, was the Cumæan; the Chaldæan, Perſic or Hebrew Sybill propheſied of Alexander of Macedon;

cedon; the Helleſpontic was coeval with Solon; the Samian and others lived in later periods.

Of the Capitoline Oracles there is ample room to doubt; ſuch a political engine in the hands of the prieſts, and to a certain degree under the direction of the Patrician order, offered opportunities for abuſe too tempting to be withſtood in a conſtitution ſo ſubject to popular commotions; it is true they were ſparingly applied to, and never brought out but in preſſing exigencies, yet thoſe exigencies and the blind idolatry of the people encouraged the abuſe by its practicability as well as by its expedience. There is a paſſage in Cicero's private letters, which makes confeſſion to this very point. The original oracles were deſtroyed by fire together with the Capitol itſelf, in which they were depoſited; the ſubſtitutes, which were collected in Greece and many other parts of the world to replace them, were finally burned by Stilicho in the reign of the emperor Honorius.

The lines, which have come down to us under the character of Sybilline Oracles, muſt be cautiouſly admitted; their authenticity

ticity is dubious in moſt parts, evidently fictitious in many, but ſome paſſages have by great authorities been conſidered as genuine: The great critic Bentley, ſpeaking of them generally in his diſſertations on Phalaris, calls the Sybilline Oracles now extant *clumſy cheats*: The learned profeſſor Whiſton has inveſtigated them with much induſtry and ſome addreſs; he ſeparates certain parts, which he believes to be genuine, and his argument merits ſerious conſideration: I am aware that this author muſt be heard with reſerve in matters of prediction, foraſmuch as he lived long enough to ſee two completions of his own Milennium: He traces the interpolated paſſages however with conſiderable ſagacity, and imputes them with good appearance of reaſon to the heretical ſectaries of the fourth century; thoſe, which he adopts as genuine, he tranſlates into literal proſe, and they are curious records. External teſtimonies make ſtrongly in favour of theſe paſſages, and it is remarkable that the ſagacity of critics have urged no internal characters in evidence againſt them. The elder Sybill has predictions of Homer and the Trojan war; their ſtile much

much reſembles that of Homer himſelf, and antient writers do not ſcruple to ſay that Homer borrowed ſeveral of theſe Sybilline lines and inſerted them in his poem, as the Sybill herſelf foretells he would do in the following words, viz.—*Then an old lying writer ſhall appear in that time again, counterfeiting his country, being alſo dim-ſighted: He ſhall have much wit and eloquence, and ſhall compoſe a wiſe poem, made up of two parts, and he ſhall ſay he was born at Chios; and he ſhall uſe the ſame verſe: He ſhall be the firſt that ſhall much adorn the commanders in the war by his praiſes, Priamus's ſon Hector and Achilles the ſon of Peleus and all others who are famous in war, and he ſhall make the Gods to aſſiſt them, writing falſely in every thing.* (*Sib. Or. lib.* viii. *v.* 357 *ad* 368.)

This is amongſt the paſſages which Mr. Whiſton thinks genuine; it is curious at leaſt, and the reader muſt ſubſcribe as much or little of his belief to it, as he thinks it deſerves; but of the actual exiſtence of theſe antient propheteſſes he will find ſufficient teſtimony, and if he chuſes to cloſe with the tranſlator in his deductions, he will conclude that—*Whilſt God ſent his Jewiſh prophets*

prophets to the nation of the Jews from Moſes to Malachi, he ſeems alſo to have ſent all along theſe Gentile propheteſſes to the Gentiles, for their guidance and direction and caution in religious matters.

I ſhall obſerve in general, that theſe Sybilline oracles are illuminated and ſupported by the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, which by the beſt opinions is decided not to allude to Heſiod's poems, as ſome have interpreted it. The Sybill chaunted her oracles, ſtanding on a ſtone, in a wild manner and with the voice of one that was frantic: Theſe oracles declare the deſolation of empires, and the various convulſions of nature by earthquakes, inundations and volcanoes: Some revolutions are diſtinctly pointed out, other things are ſhadowed diſtantly and in obſcurity; but what is moſt extraordinary upon the whole is, that certain events, in times that muſt have been poſterior to the compoſition of theſe verſes, even admitting them to be ſpurious, ſeem to fulfil theſe predictions in a very ſingular manner. The following paſſage, relative to the conflagration, reſurrection and renovation of all things is ſelected from the fourth book of oracles,

which

which Mr. Whiſton judges to be genuine; I give the tranſlation in his words, viz. *If you will not be perſuaded by me, O men of an evil heart! but love unrighteouſneſs and receive theſe advices with a perverſe mind, a fire ſhall come into the world, and theſe ſigns ſhall appear in it, ſwords and the ſound of a trumpet, when the ſun riſes, and all the world ſhall hear a bellowing and vehement noiſe, and the earth ſhall burn; and after the fire hath deſtroyed all mankind, and all cities and rivers and ſeas ſhall be ſoot and aſhes, and God ſhall extinguiſh this immenſe fire, which he had kindled, out of thoſe bones and aſhes God ſhall again form men; and when he hath made them as they were before, then ſhall the judgment be; in which God ſhall act juſtly, judging the world again; and thoſe men, who have lived wickedly, the earth ſhall cover them; but they who are righteous ſhall live again on the earth, God giving the pious ſpirit and life and ſufficient proviſions; and then all men ſhall ſee themſelves. Moſt happy is that man! who ſhall be in being at that time.*

In concluſion I think it a fair remark to be made upon theſe famous Sybilline verſes, that the evidence there is of interpolations in ſeveral parts of them makes ſtrongly for

the preſumption, that there did really exiſt certain ancient and genuine verſes, uttered by true or pretended propheteſſes, called Sybills, whereupon theſe ſeveral forgeries were grounded: The aſſent of the learned, both Heathen and Chriſtian, corroborates this opinion; but whether the copy now in our hand does or does not contain any genuine lines of theſe Sybills, is a queſtion I will not now take on myſelf to diſcuſs; all that need be ſaid on this point at preſent is, that there are ſome paſſages, whoſe antiquity is eſtabliſhed by the references and quotations of the old Heathen writers, and againſt which no objections can be drawn from the internal characters and marks of the text.

No. CXXII.

THE firſt effuſions of poetry having been addreſſed to prayer and worſhip, to the myſteries and genealogies of the deities, to religious rites, ſacrifices and initiations, and to the awful promulgation of oracles by enthuſiaſtic Sybills, chaunting forth to the aſtoniſhed

aſtoniſhed multitude their tremendous denunciations, the time was now in approach, when that portion of divine inſpiration, which ſeems to be the moving ſpring of poetry, ſhould branch into a new department.

When the human genius was more matured and better qualified by judgment and experience, and the thoughts, inſtead of being hurried along by the furious impulſe of a heated fancy, began to take into ſober contemplation the worldly actions of men, and the revolutions and changes of human events, operating upon ſociety, the poet began to prepare himſelf by forethought and arrangement of ideas for the future purpoſes of compoſition: It became his firſt buſineſs to contrive a plan and ground-work for the ſtructure of his poem: he ſaw that it muſt have uniformity, ſimplicity and order, a beginning, a middle and an end; that the main object muſt be intereſting and important, that the incidents and acceſſary parts muſt hinge upon that object, and not wander from the central idea, on which the whole ought to reſt; that a ſubject correſponding thereto, when elevated by language, ſuperior

rior to the phraſe and dialogue of the vulgar, would conſtitute a work more orderly and better conſtructed, than what aroſe from the ſudden and abrupt effuſions of unpremeditated verſe.

In this manner *Homer*, the great poet of antiquity, and the father and founder, as I muſt think, of epic poetry, revolving in his capacious mind, the magnificent events of the Grecian aſſociation for the deſtruction of Troy, then freſh in the tradition, if not in the memories of his cóntemporaries, planned the great deſign of his immortal Iliad. With this plan arranged and ſettled in his thoughts beforehand, he began to give a looſe to the force and powers of his imagination in ſtrains and rhapſodies, which by frequent recitation fixed upon his memory, and, as he warmed with the advancing compoſition, he ſallied forth in ſearch of hearers, chaunting his verſes in the aſſemblies and cities, that received him; his fancy working out thoſe wonderful examples of the ſublime, as he took his ſolitary migrations from place to place: When he made his paſſages by ſea, and committed himſelf to the terrors of the ocean, the grandeſt ſcenes in nature

came

came under his view, and his plaſtic fancy, ſeizing every object that accorded to its purpoſes, melted and compounded it into the maſs and matter of the work, on which his brain was labouring: Thus with nature in his eye, inſpiration at his heart, and contemplation ever active, ſecured by ſolitude againſt external interruption, and undiſturbed by worldly cares and concerns from within, the wandering bard performed what time has never equalled, and what to all poſterity will remain the ſtandard of perfection.—*Hunc nemo in magnis ſublimitate, in parvis proprietate, ſuperaverit: Idem latus ac preſſus, jucundus et gravis, tum copia tum brevitate mirabilis; nec poeticâ modo ſed oratoriâ virtute eminentiſſimus.* (*Quint. lib.* x.) "Him no "one ever excelled in ſublimity on great "topics, in propriety on ſmall ones; whe-"ther diffuſed or compreſſed, gay or grave, "whether for his abundance or his brevity, "he is equally to be admired, nor is he ſu-"pereminent for poetical talents only but for "oratorical alſo."

There is no doubt but Homer compoſed other poems beſides his Iliad and Odyſſey: Ariſtotle in his Poetics decidedly aſcribes

The Margites to Homer; but as to the Ilias Minor and Cypriacs, though it is evident theſe poems were in his hands, yet he ſeems ignorant of their author; the paſſage I allude to will be found in the twenty-third chapter of his Poetics; he is comparing theſe two poems with the Iliad and Odyſſey, as furniſhing ſubjects for the drama, and obſerves that the ſtage could not properly draw above one or at moſt two plots for tragedy from the Iliad and Odyſſey reſpectively, whereas many might be taken from the Cypriacs, and he enumerates to the amount of ten, which might be found in the Ilias Minor: It is evident by the context, that he does not think either of theſe poems were compoſed by Homer, and no leſs evident that he does not know to whom they are to be aſcribed; their high antiquity therefore is the only point, which this celebrated critic has put out of doubt.

The Ilias Minor appears to have been a poem, which includes the taking of Troy and the return of the Greeks: The incidents of the Æneid, as far as they refer to the Trojan ſtory, ſeem to have been taken from this poem, and in particular the epiſode

ſode of Sinon, which is amongſt the dramatic ſubjects mentioned by Ariſtotle: The controverſy between Ajax and Ulyſſes for the armour of Achilles was copied by Ovid from the ſame poem. If this work is not to be given to Homer, we muſt believe it was written ſince the Iliad, from the evidence of its title; but if the author's name was loſt in Ariſtotle's time, his antiquity is probably little ſhort of Homer's: Some ſcholiaſts have given this poem to Leſches, but when Leſches lived and of what country he was I find no account.

The Cypriacs are ſuppoſed to contain the love-adventures of the Trojan ladies during the ſiege, and probably was a poem of fiction. Herodotus has an obſervation in his ſecond book upon a paſſage in this poem, in which Paris is ſaid to have brought Helen from Sparta to Troy in the ſpace of three days, whereas Homer ſays they were long driven about on their voyage from place to place; from this want of correſpondence in a fact of ſuch conſequence, Herodotus concludes upon fair grounds of criticiſm, that Homer was not author of the Cypriacs, though Pindar aſcribes it to him: Some

give the Cypriacs to Hegeſias of Salamis, others to Staſinus a poet of Cyprus, and by ſome Homer is ſaid to have given this poem, written by himſelf, by way of portion to his daughter married to Staſinus; this daughter of Homer was called Arſephone, and his ſons Theriphon and Theolaus: Nævius tranſlated the Cypriacs into Latin verſe: Many more poems are aſcribed to Homer, which would be tedious to particularize, they are enumerated by Suidas, whom the reader, if his curioſity ſo inclines him, may readily conſult.

As to any other information perſonally reſpecting this great poet, it has been given to the world ſo ably by the late Mr. Wood in his eſſay *on the original genius and writings of Homer*, that I can add nothing on the occaſion, except the humble recommendation of my judgment in its favour. The internal evidence which this eſſayiſt adduces to fix the birth-place and early reſidence of his poet in Ionia, is both learnedly collected and ſatisfactorily applied: He obſerves that Homer, in his general manner of deſcribing the geography of countries, ſpeaks of them as more or leſs diſtant in proportion to their

bearing

bearing from Ionia; he deſcribes Zephyrus as a rude and boiſterous wind, blowing from Thrace; this circumſtance had been urged againſt Homer as a proof of his error in geography, and the ſoft and gentle quality of Zephyrus, ſo often celebrated by poets in all times, is quoted in aid of the charge; but the ſagacity and local knowledge of Mr. Wood divert the accuſation, and turn it into an argument for aſcertaining the ſpot of Homer's nativity and reſidence, by reminding us, that when the poet deſcribes the wind blowing from the Thracian mountains upon the Ægean ſea, it muſt of courſe be a Weſt wind in reſpect to Ionia, from which circumſtance he draws his conſequence that Homer was an Ionian. This argument muſt ſurely be ſatisfactory as to the place in which the poem was written; and when we have located Homer in Ionia, whilſt he was employed in writing his poem, we have one point of doubt at leaſt cleared up in his hiſtory to our conviction, and his accuracy in one branch of knowledge vindicated from the cavils of critics.

Having eſtabliſhed this point, viz. that Homer was an Aſiatic Greek, inhabiting

the ſea-coaſt, or an iſland on the coaſt of Ionia, and having vindicated his accuracy in geographical knowledge, the ingenious author of the eſſay proceeds to ſhew, by way of corollary from his propoſition thus demonſtrated, that Homer muſt have been a great traveller; that geographical knowledge was in thoſe days no otherwiſe to be acquired; that he appears to have been thoroughly converſant in the arts of building and navigating ſhips, as then underſtood and practiſed; and that his map of Greece, which both Strabo, Apollodorus the Athenian, Menogenes and Demetrius of Scepſis illuſtrated in ſo diffuſive a manner, puts it out of doubt, that he muſt have viſited the ſeveral countries and ſurveyed them with attention, before he could have laid them down with ſuch geographical accuracy: Certain it is, that ſo great was the authority of Homer's original chart, that it was a law in ſome cities that the youth ſhould learn it by heart; that Solon appealed to it for eſtabliſhing the right of Athens to Salamis in preference to the claims of the Megarenſians; and that territorial property and dominion were in ſeveral inſtances decided by

by referring to this Homeric chart: Another evidence of Homer's travels he derives from his lively delineations of national character, which he obſerves are marked with ſuch preciſion and ſupported throughout with ſuch conſiſtency, as not to allow us to think that he could have acquired this knowledge of mankind from any other ſource but his own obſervations.

It is more than probable Homer did not commit his poems to writing; it is mere conjecture whether that invention was actually in exiſtence at the time he lived; there is nothing in his works that favours this conjecture, and in ſuch a caſe ſilence is ſomething more than negative: The retention of ſuch compoſitions is certainly an aſtoniſhing effort of the human memory, but inſtances are not wanting of the like nature in early and uncivilized ſtates, and the memory is capable of being expanded by habit and exerciſe to an extraordinary and almoſt unlimited compaſs. Unwritten compoſitions were always in verſe; and metre was certainly uſed in aid of memory. It muſt not however be taken for a conſequence that writing firſt came into uſe when

Pherecydes and Cadmus firſt compoſed in proſe, as ſome have imagined; for it undoubtedly obtained before their time, and was probably brought into Greece from Phœnicia.

The engraving of the laws of Draco is ſuppoſed to have been the firſt application of that art; but it was a work of labour, and required the tool of the artiſt, rather than the hand of the penman. Thales and Pythagoras left us no writings behind them, though they ſpread their learning over Greece, and from their ſchools peopled it with philoſophers. The unwritten drama was long in exiſtence before any compoſitions of that ſort were committed to writing. Solon's laws were engraved in wood or ſtone, and there appears to have been but one table of them. Of Lycurgus's regulations there was no written record; the mind of the judge was the depoſitary of the law. Draco publiſhed his laws in Olymp. xxxix; Piſiſtratus died in Olymp. lxiii: A century had nearly paſſed between the publication of theſe laws and the firſt inſtitution of a public library at Athens; great advances no doubt were made within that period in the

the art of writing; nevertheleſs it was by no means an operation of facility in Piſiſtratus's time, and his compilation of Homer's Iliad and Odyſſey was a work of vaſt labour and of royal expence: The book remained at Athens as a princely monument of his munificence and love of letters; his library was reſorted to by all men of ſcience in Greece, but copies of the work were not circulated till the time of the Ptolemies; even Alexander of Macedon, when he had poſſeſſed himſelf of a compleat copy of his favourite poet, locked it up in the rich cheſt of which he had deſpoiled King Darius, as the moſt worthy caſe in which he could incloſe ſo ineſtimable a treaſure: When a copy of Homer was conſidered by a prince as a poſſeſſion ſo rare, it cannot be ſuppoſed his written works were in many hands: As for the detached rhapſodies, which Lycurgus in more early times brought with him out of Aſia, they muſt have been exceeding imperfect, though it is to be preſumed they were in writing.

No. CXXIII.

FROM the ſcarcity of tranſcribers in the time of Piſiſtratus, and the difficulties of collecting and compiling poems, which exiſted only in the memories of the rhapſodiſts, we are led to conſider the inſtitution of the Athenian Library, as a moſt noble and important work; at the ſame time, when we reflect how many compoſitions of the earlieſt poets depended on the fidelity of memory, we ceaſe to wonder that we have ſo many more records of names than of works. Many poets are enumerated antecedent to the time of Homer; ſome of theſe have been already mentioned, and very few indeed of their fragments are now in exiſtence.

Conjecture, and even fiction, have been enviouſly ſet to work by grammarians and others within the Chriſtian æra to found a charge of plagiariſm againſt Homer, and to diſpute his title to originality. We are told that Corinnus, who was a ſcholar of Palamedes, inventor of the Doric letters, compoſed

poſed a poem called the Iliad, whilſt Troy was ſtanding, in which he celebrates the war of Dardanus againſt the Paphlagonians, and that Homer formed himſelf upon his model, cloſely copying him: It is aſſerted by others, that he availed himſelf of the poems of Dictys the Cretan, who was of the family of Idomeneus, and lived in the time of the Trojan war: But theſe fables are ſtill leſs probable than the ſtory of his conteſt with Heſiod, and of the prize being decreed againſt him. Orpheus, Muſæus, Eumolpus and Thamyris, all of Thrace; Marſyas, Olympus, and Midas, all of the Ionian ſide of the Meander, were poets antecedent to Homer; ſo were Amphion, Demodocus, Philammon, Phemius, Ariſtæus author of the Arimaſpia, Iſatides, Drymon, Aſbolus the Centaur, Eumiclus the Cyprian, Horus of Samos, Proſnautis of Athens, and the celebrated Sybill.

The five poets, who are generally ſtiled the maſters of epic poetry, are Homer, Antimachus the Colophonian, Panyaſis of Halicarnaſſus, Piſander of Camirus, and Heſiod of Cumæ: and all theſe were natives of the Aſiatic coaſt.

Before I ceaſe ſpeaking of Homer, I cannot excuſe myſelf from ſaying ſomething on the ſubject of Mr. Pope's tranſlation, which will for ever remain a monument of his excellence in the art of verſification: It was an arduous undertaking, and the tranſlator entered upon it with a candid confeſſion that he was—*utterly incapable of doing juſtice to Homer:* he alſo ſays—*That if Mr. Dryden had tranſlated the whole work, he would no more have attempted Homer after him than Virgil, his verſion of whom (notwithſtanding ſome human errors) is the moſt noble and ſpirited tranſlation he knows in any language.* This is a declaration, that reflects as much honour on Mr. Pope, as it does on Mr. Dryden; great as his difficulties were, he has nevertheleſs executed the work in ſuch a manner as to leave ſtronger reaſons why no man ſhould attempt a like tranſlation of Homer after him, than there were why he ſhould not have undertaken it after Mr. Dryden. One thing above all ſurprizes me in his execution of it, which is *The Catalogue of the ſhips*; a difficulty that I ſhould elſe have thought inſurmountable in rhime; this however he has accompliſhed

in

in the ſmootheſt metre, and a very curious poem it is: No further attempt therefore remained to be made upon Homer, but of a tranſlation in blank verſe or in literal proſe; a contemporary of eminence in the republic of letters has lately given a proſe tranſlation of the Iliad, though Mr. Pope had declared in his preface that *no literal tranſlation can be juſt to an excellent original in a ſuperior language*—It is eaſy to ſee what Mr. Pope aims to obtain by this poſition, and we muſt interpret the expreſſion of the word *juſt* to mean that no ſuch literal tranſlation can be equal to the ſpirit, though it ſhall be *juſt* to the ſenſe of its original: He knew full well, that no tranſlation in rhime could be literal, and he was therefore intereſted to premiſe that no literal tranſlation could be *juſt*; whether he has hereby vindicated his own deviations from the ſenſe of his author and thoſe pleonaſms, which the ſhackles of rhime have to a certain degree driven him into, and probably would have driven any other man much more, muſt be left with the claſſical reader to judge for himſelf: ſome of this deſcription, and in particular a learned Lecturer in Rhetoric, who has lately favoured the public with a collec-

tion

tion of eſſays, pronounce of Mr. Pope's poem *that it is no tranſlation of Homer:* The ſame author points out the advantages of Miltonic verſe; and it muſt be confeſſed that Miltonic verſe ſeems to be that happy medium in metre, which ſtands the beſt chance of giving the compreſſed ſenſe of Homer without debaſing its ſpirit: It is a ſtern criticiſm to ſay that Mr. Pope's *is no tranſlation of Homer*; his warmeſt admirers will admit that it is not a cloſe one, and probably they will not diſpute but that it might be as *juſt*, if it had a cloſer reſemblance to its original, notwithſtanding what he ſays in the paſſage I have quoted from his preface. It is agreed therefore that an opening is ſtill left between literal proſe and fettered rhyme; I ſhould conceive it might be a pleaſant exerciſe for men of talents to try a few ſpecimens from ſuch paſſages in the Iliad, as they might like beſt, and theſe perhaps might engage ſome one or more to proceed with the work, publiſhing a book at a time (as it were experimentally) by which means they might avail themſelves of the criticiſms of their candid judges, and make their final compilation more correct: If

this

this was ably executed, a very ſplendid work might in time be compleated to the honour of our nation and language, embelliſhed with engravings of deſigns by our eminent maſters from ſelect ſcenes in each rhapſody, according to the judgment of the artiſt.

Small engines may ſet great machines in motion, as weak advocates ſometimes open ſtrong cauſes; in that hope, and with no other preſumption whatever, I ſhall conclude this paper with a few lines tranſlated from the outſet of the Iliad, which the reader, whoſe patience has hitherto kept company with me, may or may not peruſe as he thinks fit.

SING, Goddeſs Muſe, the wrath of Peleus' ſon,
Deſtructive ſource of all the numerous ills
That vex'd the ſons of Greece, and ſwept her hoſt
Of valiant heroes to untimely death;
But their unburied bodies left to feaſt
The dogs of Troy and carrion birds of prey;
So Jove decreed (and let Jove's will be done!)
In that ill hour, when firſt contention ſprang
'Twixt Agamemnon, of the armies chief,
And goddeſs-born Achilles. Say, what power
'Mongſt heav'n's high ſynod ſtirr'd the fatal ſtrife?—
Son of Latona by almighty Jove—
He, for the king's offence, with mortal plague
Smote the contagious camp, vengeance divine

For

For the inſulted honour of his prieſt,
Sage Chryſes; to the ſtation'd fleet of Greece,
With coſtly ranſom off'ring to redeem
His captive daughter, came the holy ſeer;
The laurel garland, enſign of his God,
And golden ſceptre in his hand he bore;
And thus to all, but chief the kingly ſons
Of Atreus, ſuppliant he addreſs'd his ſuit.
" Kings, and ye well-appointed warriors all!
" So may the Gods, who on Olympus' heighth
" Hold their celeſtial manſions, aid your arms
" To level yon proud towers, and to your homes
" Reſtore you, as to me you ſhall reſtore
" My captive daughter, and her ranſom take,
" In awful reverence of the God I ſerve."
He ceas'd; th' aſſembled warriors all aſſent,
All but Atrides, he, the general voice
Oppoſing, with determined pride rejects
The proffer'd ranſom and inſults the ſuit.
" Let me not find thee, Prieſt! if thou preſum'ſt
" Or here to loiter, or henceforth to come,
" 'Tis not that ſceptre, no, nor laurel crown
" Shall be thy ſafeguard: Hence! I'll not reſtore
" The captive thou demand'ſt; doom'd for her life
" In diſtant Argos, where I reign, to ply
" The houſewife's loom and ſpread my nightly couch;
" Fly, whilſt thy flight can ſave thee, and begone!"
No more; obedient to the ſtern decree,
The aged ſuitor turns his trembling ſteps
To the ſurf-beaten ſhore; there calls his God,
And in the bitterneſs of anguiſh prays.
" Hear me, thou God, who draw'ſt the ſilver bow;
" Hear thou, whom Chryſa worſhips; hear, thou king

" Of

" Of Tenedos, of Cilla; Smintheus, hear!
" And, if thy prieſt hath ever deck'd thy ſhrine
" Or on thy flaming altars offer'd up
" Grateful oblations, ſend thine arrows forth;
" Strike, ſtrike theſe tyrants and avenge my tears!"
Thus Chryſes pray'd, nor was the pray'r unheard;
Quick at his call the vengeful God uprear'd
His tow'ring ſtature on Olympus' top;
Behind him hung his bow; onward he ſtrode
Terrific, black as night, and as he ſhook
His quiver'd arrows, the affrighted air
Echo'd the dreadful knell: Now from aloft
Wide o'er the ſubject fleet he glanc'd his eye,
And from his ſilver bow with ſounding ſtring
Launch'd th' unerring ſhaft: On mules and dogs
The miſſile death alighted; next to man
Spread the contagion dire; then thro' the camp
Frequent and ſad gleam'd the funereal fires.
Nine mournful days they gleam'd; haply the tenth
With better omens roſe; Achilles now
Conven'd the Grecian chiefs, thereto inſpir'd
By Jove's fair conſort, for the Goddeſs mourn'd
The deſolating miſchief: At the call
Of great Achilles none delay'd to come,
And in full council thus the hero ſpake.
" If quick retreat from this contagious ſhore
" Might ſave a remnant of our war-worn hoſt,
" My voice, Atrides, wou'd adviſe retreat;
" But not for me ſuch counſels: Call your ſeers,
" Prophets and prieſts, interpreters of dreams,
" For Jove holds commerce with mankind in ſleep,
" And let that holy convocation ſay
" Why falls Apollo's vengeance on our heads;

" And

" And if oblations can avail for peace
" And intermiſſion from this waſting plague,
" Let victims bleed by hecatombs, and glut
" His altars, ſo his anger be appeas'd."

CXXIV.

HESIOD's heroic holds a middle place between the Orphean and Homeric ſtile; his Genealogy of the Deities reſembling the former, and his Shield of Hercules at due diſtance following the latter: His famous poem in praiſe of illuſtrious women is loſt; from the words Ἢ οἵη, with which it opened, it came in time to be generally known by the name of the *Eoics*, or *The Great Eoics*, and this title by miſinterpretation has been conſtrued to refer to the proper name of ſome favourite miſtreſs, whom he choſe to make the heroine of his poem: the poet being born at Aſcra, a ſmall village in the neigbourhood of Mount Helicon, *Eoa* was ſuppoſed to have been a beautiful damſel of Aſcra, whom he was in love with: This poem ſeems to have been conſidered as the beſt work of the author, at leaſt it was that which

which brought him moſt in favour with his contemporaries, and gained him ſome admirers, who even preferred him to Homer; we cannot wonder if that ſex at leaſt who were the objects of his panegyric, were the warmeſt in his praiſe. I ſuſpect that Homer did not pay much court to the ladies in his Margites, and as for the Cypriacs they were profeſſedly written to expoſe the gallantries of the fair ſex; the character of Penelope however in the Odyſſey is a ſtandard of conjugal fidelity, and Helen, though a frail heroine in the Iliad, is painted with ſuch delicate touches as to recommend her in the moſt intereſting manner to our pity and forgiveneſs.

Heſiod's addreſs carried every thing before it, and the choice of his ſubjects ſhews that popularity was his ſtudy, for not content with engaging the fair ſex in his favour by the gallantry of *The Great Eoics*, he flattered the heroes of his time, or at leaſt the deſcendants of heroes, by a poem, which he intitled *The Heroic Genealogy:* As one was a profeſſed panegyric of beautiful and illuſtrious women, the other was written in the praiſe of brave and diſtinguiſhed men: If

this

this heroic catalogue comprized only the great and noble of his own ſex, his *Times* and *Seaſons* were addreſſed to the community at large, and conveyed inſtruction to the huſbandman and labourer; nor was this all, for great authorities have given to Heſiod the fables commonly aſcribed to Æſop, who is ſuppoſed only to have made ſome additions to Heſiod's collection; if this were ſo, we have another ſtrong reaſon for his popularity —*For fables*, as Quintilian well obſerves, *are above all things calculated to win the hearts of the vulgar and unlearned, who delight in pleaſing tales and fictions, and are eaſily led away with what they delight in.*—In ſhort Heſiod ſeems to have written to all ranks, degrees and deſcriptions of people; to rich and poor, to the learned and unlearned, to men, women, and even to the deities themſelves.

Can we be ſurprized then if this politic and pleaſing author was the idol of his time, and gained the prize even though Homer was his competitor? His contemporaries gave judgment in his favour, but poſterity revokes the decree: Quintilian, who probably had all his works before him, pronounces

nounces of Heſiod,—*That he rarely ſoars; that great part of his works are nothing elſe but catalogues and ſtrings of names, intermixed however with uſeful precepts gracefully delivered and appoſitely addreſſed; in fine, that his merit conſiſts in the middle ſtile of writing.* —Talents of this ſort probably recommended him to the unreſerved applauſe of all, whom ſuperiority of genius in another affects with envy and provokes to detraction. Many ſuch, beſides the grammarian Daphidas, were found to perſecute the name of Homer with malevolence, whilſt he roſe ſuperior to their attacks: The rhapſodiſts, whoſe vocation it was in public and private to entertain the company with their recitations, were ſo conſtantly employed in repeating Homer's poems preferably to all others, that in time they were univerſally called Homeriſts: Demetrius Phalereus at length introduced them into the theatres, and made them chaunt the poems of his favourite author on the ſtage: The poet Simonides, celebrated for his memory, repeated long paſſages of Homer, ſitting in the public theatre on a ſeat erected for him on the ſtage for that purpoſe; Caſſander, king of Macedonia,

cedonia, had the whole Iliad and Odyſſey by heart, and was continually repeating, not in company only, but in his private hours to himſelf: Steſichorus alſo, the ſublimeſt of all poets next to Homer, and his greateſt imitator, was remarkably fond of chaunting forth paſſages in the Iliad and Odyſſey; it is related alſo that he uſed frequently to repeat verſes of Heſiod, Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Phocylides the Mileſian, who is the ſuppoſed author of the poem intitled *Paræneſis*, yet extant. We are obliged to the grammarians for many ſcraps or fragments from the wrecks of authors, but in the caſe of Heſiod's Eoics meet with one remnant only preſerved by Pauſanias, and this relates to Iphigenia, who, by Heſiod's account, was by the favour of Diana reprieved from extinction and immortalized in the perſon of the goddeſs Hecate.

As for the bards of the Orphean family, it is difficult to adjuſt their chronologies and deſcents; I have already enumerated five poets of the name of Orpheus, and ſaid in general terms, that there were ſeveral of the name of Muſæus; they may be thus deſcribed; viz. firſt, Muſæus, ſon of Antiphemus

Antiphemus and diſciple of Orpheus, ſtiled an epic poet; he wrote a long poem of four thouſand verſes containing precepts, addreſſed to his ſon Eumolpus, and thence intitled *The Eumolpiad*; he wrote a hymn to Ceres, a poem on the cure of diſeaſes, and publiſhed certain prophetic verſes, though his title to theſe has been brought into diſpute by the artifices of one Onomacritus, a plagiariſt and pretended diviner in the time of Hipparchus, who put off theſe verſes of Muſæus as his own. The ſecond Muſæus was grandſon of the firſt and ſon of Eumolpus; various poems are given to this Muſæus, particularly The Theogony, The Sphere, The Myſteries of Initiation and Luſtration, The Titans, &c. The third Muſæus, a Theban, was ſon of Thamyris and grandſon of Philammon; he flouriſhed about the time of the Trojan war: His father Thamyris is recorded by Homer.

" And Dorion fam'd for Thamyris' diſgrace,
" Superior once of all the tuneful race,
" Till vain of mortals' empty praiſe he ſtrove
" To match the ſeed of cloud-compelling Jove;
" Too daring bard! whoſe unſucceſsful pride
" Th' immortal Muſes in their art defy'd;

" Th'

" Th' avenging Muſes of the light of day
" Depriv'd his eyes, and ſnatch'd his voice away;
" No more his heav'nly voice was heard to ſing,
" His hand no more awak'd the ſilver ſtring."

(POPE, Il. 2.)

Such was the fate of blind Thamyris, but he has double ſecurity for immortality, having a place not only in the Iliad of Homer, but alſo in the Paradiſe Loſt of Milton:

" Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
" That waſh thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
" Nightly I viſit; nor ſometimes forget
" Thoſe other two equall'd with me in fate,
" So were I equall'd with them in renown,
" Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides."

(BOOK 3d.)

Thus although the works of this famous bard have totally periſhed, and *his heavenly voice is no more heard to ſing*, yet it has been his ſingular good fortune to be celebrated by the greateſt poet of antiquity, and ranked with that very poet by the greateſt of the moderns; and all three involved in the ſame viſitation of blindneſs; an extraordinary concurrence!

The fourth Muſæus was ſon of Orpheus and Preſident of the Eleuſynian Myſteries: This

This is the Muſæus, whom Juſtin Martyr ſays was inſtructed by his father in a more rational religion than he practiſed in the temple of Ceres, and taught the knowledge and worſhip of one ſupreme God, creator of all things. The fifth was Muſæus of Epheſus, an epic poet; the ſixth a grammarian, whoſe treatiſe on the Iſthmian games is quoted by Euripides; and the ſeventh and laſt, is that Muſæus, whom the poet Martial mentions for having written *Pathiciſſimos libellos*, and the author as it is probable of the little poem upon Hero and Leander, now extant, which Scaliger ſo much admires.

Archilochus flouriſhed in Olymp. xxiii. and was a very early writer of Iambics;—*He excels*, ſays Quintilian, *in energy of ſtile; his periods ſtrong, compreſſed and brilliant, replete with life and vigour: ſo that if he is ſecond to any it is from defect of ſubject, not from natural inferiority of genius.*

He adds, that—*Ariſtarchus was of opinion, that of all the writers of Iambic verſe Archilochus alone carried it to perfection.*—Athenæus has preſerved a little epigram of his no otherwiſe worth recording than as it is the

only relick of his muſe, except one diſtich in long and ſhort verſe, purporting that he was devoted to Mars and the Muſes; the epigram may be tranſlated as follows:—

Glutton, we aſk thee not to be our gueſt,
It is thy belly bids thee to our feaſt.

ARCHIL.

Archilochus fell in battle by the hand of Calondas, who immolated his own ſon to the manes of the poet to atone the vengeance of Apollo: He was a man of great private virtue and diſtinguiſhed courage, but a ſevere unſparing ſatiriſt.

Tiſias, commonly called *Steſichorus* from his invention of the chorus, which he ſung to the accompaniment of his harp, was contemporary with Solon, and born at Himera in the iſland of Sicily; as a lyric poet he was unequalled by any of the Greeks, but Pindar; his ſubjects were all of the epic caſt, and he oftentimes roſe to a ſublimity, that rivalled Homer, upon whoſe model he formed himſelf: this he would have done throughout according to the opinion of Quintilian, if his genius had not led him into a redundancy, but his characters are drawn with

great dignity and preſerved juſtly. He did not viſit Greece till he was far advanced in age, and died in Olym. lvi. in the city of Catana in his native iſland of Sicily, where he was buried at the public coſt with diſtinguiſhed ceremony and magnificence. A tomb was erected to his memory near one of the city gates, which was thenceforward called the gate of Steſichorus; this tomb was compoſed of eight columns, had eight ſteps and eight angles after the cabaliſtical numbers of Pythagoras, whoſe myſterious philoſophy was then in general vogue; the cubic number of eight was emblematic of ſtrength, ſolidity and magnificence, and from this tomb of Steſichorus aroſe the Greek proverb Πάντα Οκτώ, by which was meant any thing perfect and compleat. Phalaris of Agrigentum erected a temple to his name and decreed him divine honours; all the cities in Sicily conſpired in lamenting the death of their favorite poet, and vied with each other in the trophies they dedicated to his memory.

Epimenides of Crete, the epic poet, was contemporary with Solon, and there is a letter in the life of that great man inſerted

by the ſophiſts, which is feigned to have been written by Solon in his exile to Epimenides: This poet as well as his contemporary Ariſtæas is ſaid to have had the faculty of ſtopping the functions of life and recalling them at pleaſure: *Ariſtæas* wrote a poem entitled Arimaſpea, containing the hiſtory of the northern Arimaſpeans, a people of Scythia, whom he deſcribes as the fierceſt of all human beings, and pretends that they have only one eye; he alſo compoſed an heroic poem on the genealogy of the deities: Strabo ſays, if ever there was a quack in the world, this Ariſtæas was one. *Simonides* the poet lived in the court of Hipparchus, and was much careſſed by that elegant prince; he was a pleaſing courtly writer, and excelled in the pathetic. *Alcæus* was poet, muſician and warrior; Quintilian gives him great praiſe for the boldneſs of his ſatire againſt tyrants, and occaſionally for the moral tendency of his writings, but admits that ſometimes his muſe is looſe and wanton: It appears from ſome fragments preſerved by Athenæus, that he wrote ſeveral poems or ſonnets in praiſe of drinking; there is alſo a fragment in the martial ſtile,

deſcribing

deſcribing the variety of armour, with which his houſe was adorned. *Callimachus*, *Theocritus*, *Anacreon* and *Sappho*, are to a certain degree known to us by their remains: Every branch of poetry, but the drama, was at this æra at its greateſt perfection.

No. CXXV.

THERE is a conſiderable fragment in Athenæus of a love-poem written by *Hermeſianax* of Colophon to his miſtreſs Leontium; the poet recommends his paſſion by telling her how love has triumphed over all the great geniuſes in their turns, and begins with the inſtances of Orpheus and Muſæus, and brings them down to Sophocles, Euripides, Pythagoras, and Socrates. This Hermeſianax muſt have been a contemporary of Epicurus, foraſmuch as Leontium was the miſtreſs of that philoſopher as well as of his diſciple Metrodorus: It is plain therefore that the learned Gerard John Voſſius did not advert to this circumſtance, when he puts Hermeſianax amongſt the

poets of a doubtful age. Leontium was an Athenian courtezan, no leſs celebrated for ſcience than beauty, for ſhe engaged in a philoſophical controverſy with Theophraſtus, of which Cicero takes notice (*lib.* 1. *de Nat. Deor.*) Pliny alſo records an anecdote of her being painted by Theodorus ſitting in a ſtudious attitude.

This fragment may not improperly be called the amours of the Greek poets, and as it relates to many, of whom we have been ſpeaking, and is withal a very curious ſpecimen of an author very little known even by name, I have inſerted the following tranſlation in the hope that it will not be unacceptable to my readers.

Οἵην μὲν φίλος γὸς ἀνήγαγεν Οἰάγροιο,
Αἰγριὸπην θρῆσσαν ϛειλάμενος κιθάρη.—
&c. (*Athen. lib.* xiii.)

SUCH was the nymph, whom *Orpheus* led
From the dark manſions of the dead,
Where Charon with his lazy boat
Ferries o'er Lethe's ſedgy moat;
Th' undaunted minſtrel ſmites the ſtrings,
His ſtrain thro' hell's vaſt concave rings:
Cocytus hears the plaintive theme,
And refluent turns his pitying ſtream;

Three-

Three-headed Cerberus, by fate
Poſted at Pluto's iron gate,
Low-crouching rolls his haggard eyes
Ecſtatic and foregoes his prize:
With ears erect at hell's wide doors
Lies liſtening as the ſongſter ſoars;
Thus muſic charm'd the realms beneath,
And beauty triumph'd over death.

The bard, whom night's pale regent bore
In ſecret on the Athenian ſhore,
Muſæus, felt the ſacred flame,
And burnt for the fair Theban dame
Antiope, whom mighty Love
Made pregnant by imperial Jove;
The poet plied his amorous ſtrain,
Preſs'd the fond fair, nor preſs'd in vain,
For Ceres, who the veil undrew,
That ſcreen'd her myſteries from his view,
Propitious this kind truth reveal'd,
That woman cloſe beſieg'd will yield.

Old *Heſiod* too his native ſhade
Made vocal to th' Aſcrean maid,
The bard his heav'n-directed lore
Forſook, and hymn'd the Gods no more:
Soft love-ſick ditties now he ſung,
Love touch his harp, love tun'd his tongue,
Silent his Heliconian lyre,
And love's put out religion's fire.

Homer, of all paſt bards the prime,
And wonder of all future time,
Whom Jove with wit ſublimely bleſt,
And touch'd with pureſt fire his breaſt,

From gods and heroes turn'd away
To warble the domeſtic lay,
And wand'ring to the deſart iſle,
On whoſe parch'd ſands no ſeaſons ſmile,
In diſtant Ithaca was ſeen
Chaunting the ſuit-repelling Queen.

Mimnermus tun'd his am'rous lay,
When time had turn'd his temples grey;
Love revell'd in his aged veins,
Soft was his lyre, and ſweet his ſtrains;
Frequenter of the wanton feaſt,
Nanno his theme, and youth his gueſt.

Antimachus with tender art
Pour'd forth the ſorrows of his heart;
In her Dardanian grave he laid
Chryſeis his beloved maid;
And thence returning ſad beſide
Pactolus' melancholy tide,
To Colophon the minſtrel came,
Still ſighing forth the mournful name,
Till lenient time his grief appeas'd,
And tears by long indulgence ceas'd.

Alcæus ſtrung his ſounding lyre,
And ſmote it with a hand of fire,
To Sappho, fondeſt of the fair,
Chaunting the loud and loſty air.

Whilſt old *Anacreon*, wet with wine,
And crown'd with wreaths of Leſbian vine,
To his unnatural minion ſung
Ditties that put to bluſh the young.

Ev'n

Ev'n *Sophocles*, whoſe honey'd lore
Rivals the bee's delicious ſtore,
Chorus'd the praiſe of wine and love,
Choiceſt of all the gifts of Jove.

Euripides, whoſe tragic breaſt
No yielding fair one ever preſt,
At length in his obdurate heart
Felt love's revengeful rankling dart,
Thro' Macedon with furious joy
Panting he chas'd the pathic boy;
Till vengeance met him in the way,
And blood-hounds made the bard their prey.

Philoxenus, by wood-nymphs bred
On fam'd Cithæron's ſacred head,
And train'd to muſic, wine and ſong,
'Midſt orgies of the frantic throng,
When beauteous Galatea died,
His flute and thyrſus caſt aſide;
And wand'ring to thy penſive coaſt,
Sad Melos, where his love was loſt,
Each night thro' the reſponſive air
Thy echoes witneſs'd his deſpair:
Still, ſtill his plaintive harp was heard,
Soft as the nightly-ſinging bird.

Philotas too in Battis' praiſe
Sung his long-winded roundelays;
His ſtatue in the Coan grove
Now breathes in braſs perpetual love.

The mortified abſtemious ſage,
Deep read in learning's crabbed page,

Pythagoras, whoſe boundleſs ſoul
Scal'd the wide globe from pole to pole,
Earth, planets, ſeas and heav'n above,
Yet found no ſpot ſecure from love;
With love declines unequal war,
And trembling drags his conqueror's car,
Theano claſp'd him in her arms,
And wiſdom ſtoop'd to beauty's charms.

Ev'n *Socrates*, whoſe moral mind
With truth enlighten'd all mankind,
When at Aſpatia's ſide he ſate,
Still found no end to love's debate,
For ſtrong indeed muſt be that heart
Where love finds no unguarded part.

Sage *Ariſtippus* by right rule
Of logic purg'd the Sophiſt's ſchool,
Check'd folly in its headlong courſe,
And ſwept it down by reaſon's force;
'Till Venus aim'd the heart-felt blow
And laid the mighty victor low.

A little before the time that Piſiſtratus eſtabliſhed his tyranny at Athens, the people of Greece had diſtinguiſhed certain of their moſt eminent ſages by the denomination of the Seven Wiſe men. This flattering pre-eminence ſeems to have been diſtributed with more attention to the ſeparate claims of the different ſtates, than to the particular pretenſions of the perſons, who compoſed this

this celebrated junto: If any one community had affected to monopolize the prerogative of wiſdom, others would hardly have ſubſcribed their aſſent to ſo partial a diſtribution; and yet when ſuch diſtinguiſhed characters as Pythagoras, Anacharſis the Scythian, Miſon, Pherecydes, Epimenides, and Piſiſtratus himſelf, were excluded, or at beſt rated only as wiſemen-extraordinary, many of their admirers complained of the excluſion, and inſiſted on their being rated in the liſt; hence ariſes a difficulty in determining the preciſe number of the principals: The common account however is as follows, viz. *Solon* of Athens, *Thales* of Miletus, *Periander* of Corinth, *Cleobulus* the Rhodian, *Chilon* the Lacedæmonian, *Bias* of Priene, and *Pittacus* of Mitylene.

This diſtribution was well calculated to inſpire emulation amongſt rival ſtates, and to that emulation Greece was indebted for the conſpicuous figure ſhe made in the world of letters. The Ionic and Italian ſchools of philoſophy were eſtabliſhed under Thales and Pythagoras; the firſt was ſupported by Anaximander the ſucceſſor of Thales, by Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Ari-

ſtotle, Diogenes, Zeno and other illuſtrious men; Pythagoras's ſchool devolved upon Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zenophanes, Democritus, Pyrrho and Epicurus. The original tenets of the firſt maſters were by no means adhered to by their deſcendants; the wanderings of error are not to be reſtrained by ſyſtem; hypotheſis was built upon hypotheſis, and the labyrinth at length became too intricate to be unravelled: Sparks of light were in the mean time ſtruck out by the active colliſion of wit; noble truths occaſionally broke forth, and ſayings, worthy to be regiſtered amongſt the doctrines of Chriſtian revelation, fell from heathen lips: in the lofty ſpirit of philoſophy they inſulted pain, reſiſted pleaſure, and ſet at defiance death itſelf. Reſpect is due to ſo much dignity of character; the meek forgiving tenets, which Chriſtianity inculcates, were touched upon but lightly and by few; ſome however by the force of intellect followed the light of reaſon into a future ſtate of immortality; they appear to have contemplated the Divine Eſſence, as he is, ſimple and ſupreme, and not filtered into attributes corruptly perſonified by a ſynod of divinities.

Of

Of ſuch men we muſt think and ſpeak with admiration and affection.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic ſchool, was a great man and a good citizen; he ſtudied geometry under Egyptian maſters, and introduced ſome new diſcoveries in aſtronomy and the celeſtial ſphere, regulating and correcting the Greek Calendar, which Solon, about the ſame time, made ſome attempts to reform at Athens. This he did by bringing it to a conformity with the Hebrew calendar, except that his year began with the ſummer ſolſtice, and that of the Hebrews with the vernal. Now the Hebrew calendar compriſed twelve months, and each month ſeverally compriſed the ſame, or nearly the ſame, number of days as our's. This appears by an examination of Moſes's account of the deluge in the ſeventh chapter of Geneſis.

Amongſt other nations the calendar was exceedingly vague and unſettled: The Egyptians meaſured their year by four months; the Arcadians by three; the Carians and Acarnanians by ſix; and the people of Alba by ten; at the ſame time all theſe nations were in the practice of making up the

year

year to its natural completion by intercalendary months or days. In the time of Romulus the Romans followed the calendar of the Albanians; and of the ten months, which their year conſiſted of, four comprized thirty-one days each, viz. Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October; the ſixth other conſiſted of thirty days, and were named Aprilis, Junius, Sextilis, September, November, December. By this calendar Romulus's year regularly conſiſted of only 304 days, and to compleat the natural period he was obliged to reſort to the expedient of intercalendary days.

Numa was too much of a philoſopher not to ſeek a remedy for theſe deficiencies, and added two months to his year: The former of theſe he named Januarius from bifrons Janus, one of whoſe faces was ſuppoſed to look towards the paſt, and the other towards the ſucceeding year; the other new month he called Februarius, from Februus, the deity preſiding over luſtrations; this being the month for the religious rites of the Dii Manes, it was made to conſiſt of twenty-eight days, being an even number; all the others, conformably to the ſuperſtition of the times, conſiſted of odd

numbers

numbers as more propitious, and accordingly Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October, had each thirty-one days, and the other ſeven, twenty-nine days, ſo that the year, thus regulated, had 355 days, and it was left to the prieſts to make up the reſidue with ſupplementary days.

This commiſſion became a dangerous prerogative in the hands of the ſacerdotal order, and was executed with much irregularity and abuſe; they lengthened and ſhortened the natural period of the year, as intereſt influenced them to accord to the prolongation or abbreviation of the annual magiſtracies dependant thereupon. In this ſtate things were ſuffered to remain till Julius Cæſar ſucceeded to the pontificate; he then undertook a reform of the calendar, being in his third conſulate, his colleague being Œmilius Lepidus. Aſſiſted by the beſt aſtronomers of the time, particularly the philoſopher Soſigenes, he extended the year of his reform to 442 days, and thenceforward ordained that the year ſhould conſiſt of 365 days, diſtributed into months as it now ſtands, except that he added one day

to

to February every fifth year, and not every third.

Thales died in the fifty-eighth Olympiad in extreme old age: the famous philoſopher Pherecydes died a few years before him of that horrible diſtemper called the *Morbus Pediculoſus*, and in his laſt illneſs wrote, or is ſuppoſed to have written, to Thales as follows:

PHERECYDES to THALES.

May your death be eaſy, when the hour ſhall come! for my part, when your letter reached me, I was ſinking under the attack of a moſt loathſome diſeaſe accompanied with a continual fever. I have therefore given it in charge to my friends, as ſoon as they ſhall have committed my remains to the earth, to convey my manuſcripts to your hands. If you and the reſt of your wiſe fraternity ſhall on peruſal approve of making them pūblic, do ſo; otherwiſe let them not ſee the light; certainly they do not ſatisfy my judgment in all particulars; the beſt of us are liable to error; the truth of things is not diſcoverable by human ſagacity, and I am juſtly doubtful

ful of myſelf: Upon queſtions of theology I have been cautious how I have committed myſelf: other matters I have treated with leſs reſerve; in all caſes however I ſuggeſt rather than dictate.

Though I feel my diſſolution approaching and inevitable, I have not abſolutely diſmiſſed my phyſicians and friends; but as my diſeaſe is infectious, I do not let them enter my doors, but have contrived a ſignal for informing them of my condition, and have warned them to prepare themſelves for paying the laſt offices to my corpſe to-morrow.

Farewell for ever!

No. CXXVI.

Ignotum Tragicæ genus inveniſſe Camenæ
Dicitur, et plauſtris vexiſſe poemata Theſpis
Qui canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.
(HORAT.)

HAVING carried down the hiſtory of Athens to that period, when a new ſpecies of poetry made its appearance, I propoſe in this place to treat of the origin and introduction

introduction of the drama; in doing this, my chief ſtudy will be to methodize and arrange the matter, which other writers have thrown out, ſenſible that in a ſubject ſo often exhauſted very little elſe can now remain to be done.

Ariſtotle ſays—*That Homer alone properly deſerves the name of poet, not only as being ſuperior to all others ſo called, but as the firſt who prepared the way for the introduction of the drama; and this he did, not merely by the diſplay of his powers on grave and tragic ſubjects, but inaſmuch as he ſuggeſted the firſt plot and device for comedy alſo; not founding it upon coarſe and opprobrious invective, but upon wholeſome and facetious ridicule: ſo that his Margites bears the ſame analogy to comedy, as his Iliad and Odyſſey do to tragedy.*

This aſſertion in favour of Homer coming from ſuch high authority has been adopted by the ſcholiaſts, critics and commentators, who have treated either of that great poet or of the drama from the time when it was made to the preſent: But it ſhould be obſerved that Ariſtotle is not here ſpeaking of the drama profeſſedly as a chronologiſt, but reviewing it as an object of criticiſm, and under

under this view it can no otherwiſe come into contemplation than in its more advanced and perfect ſtate, when built upon the model of Homer's fables and characters; after it had thrown off the barbarous traces of its real origin, and had quitted Bacchus and the Satyrs. Of tragedy, as a written and conſiſtent poem, Homer may well be ſtiled the father; for when Phrynichus and Æſchylus introduced on the ſcene Μύθος καὶ Πάθη, the ſtories and calamities of heroes, tragedy became Homeric, or in other words aſſumed a dignity of tone and character, that was copied from the epic of Homer, as comedy was from his iambic; and agreeably to this Ariſtotle names Epicharmus as the firſt comic poet, who was profeſſedly a copyiſt of the Margites.

Now by ſettling the dates of a few well-eſtabliſhed facts we ſhall bring this queſtion into cloſer view. Piſiſtratus after a broken reign of thirty-three years died in Olymp. lxiii. whereas the Marmor Chronicon records, that the firſt tragedy at Athens was made by Theſpis, and acted on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. Suidas confirms this record: From the ſame authority (viz. Mar. Chron.) we collect

lect that Sufarion made the firſt comedy at Athens, and acted it on a moveable ſcaffold in the middle of Olymp. liv. being one year before Piſiſtratus eſtabliſhed his tyranny. By theſe dates it appears that comedy was made and acted at Athens ſeveral years before the compilation of Homer's epic poems, and tragedy before or at that time, admitting for the preſent that Theſpis was the firſt who made tragedies, and that the record above cited was the date of his firſt tragedy.

I am aware that theſe facts alone will not prove that the inventors of the drama did not copy from Homer; for it cannot be denied that Theſpis and even Sufarion might have reſorted to his poems, before they were compiled by Piſiſtratus; and as for Theſpis, if we were to admit the tragedies, which Suidas aſcribes to him, to be genuine, it is evident from their titles that ſome of them were built upon Homeric fables; but good critics find ſtrong reaſons to object to this liſt, which Suidas has given us, and I muſt think it a fair preſumption againſt their authenticity, that Ariſtotle, who gives Homer the credit of furniſhing the firſt ſuggeſtions

of

of the drama, does not inſtance Theſpis's tragedies; for had they been what Suidas reports, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that Ariſtotle would have overlooked an inſtance ſo much to his purpoſe, or failed to have quoted Theſpis, as the firſt tragic writer, when he names Epicharmus as the firſt comic one, who copied from Homer.

Plutarch in his Sympoſia ſays—*That when Phrynichus and Æſchylus firſt turned the ſubject of tragedy to fables and doleful ſtories, the people ſaid, What's this to Bacchus?*—According to this anecdote how could Theſpis, who was anterior to Phrynichus and Æſchylus, be a writer of ſuch tragedies, as Suidas has aſcribed to him.

Another very ingenious argument for their confutation is drawn from a ſhort fragment, which the ſame author has quoted from the *Pentheus*, one of thoſe tragedies which Suidas gives to Theſpis: This fragment purports that—*The Deity is ſituated remote from all pleaſure or pain:* A paſſage of this caſt can never have been part of a ludicrous drama belonging to Bacchus and the Satyrs, and therefore either Plutarch muſt be miſtaken

in

in his anecdote above cited, or Suidas in his author of *The Pentheus*; but it is further urged by a ſagacious critic, that this fragment bears internal evidence of a forgery, being doctrine of a later date than Theſpis, and plainly of the fabrication of Plato's academy: In confirmation of this remark, circumſtances of a more poſitive nature are adduced, and Diogenes Laertius is brought forward, who actually charges Heraclides of writing certain tragedies and fathering them upon Theſpis, and this charge Laertius grounds upon the authority of Ariſtoxenus the muſician: the credit of Ariſtoxenus as a philoſopher, hiſtorian, and faithful relator of facts, is as well eſtabliſhed with the learned world, as the character of Heraclides is notorious for plagiariſm, falſehood and affectation; he was a vain rich man, a great juggler in literature, aſpiring to rival Plato in his writings, and one who was detected in bribing the Pythia to decree a crown of gold and divine honours to him after his deceaſe; a man as apt to palm his own productions upon others as he was to aſſume other men's productions to himſelf,

himſelf, which he was convicted of by Chamæleon in his ſpurious treatiſe upon Homer and Heſiod.

This practice of fathering tragedies upon great names obtained in more inſtances than one; for Dionyſius wrote a tragedy called Parthenopæus and palmed it upon Sophocles, a bolder forgery than this of Heraclides; and it is remarkable, than Heraclides himſelf was caught by this forgery, and quotes the Parthenopæus as genuine.

Plato ſpeaking of The Deity uſes theſe words—Πορρω ἡδονῆς καὶ λύπης ἵδρυται τὸ θεῖον—*The Deity is ſituated remote from all pleaſure and pain:* A ſentiment ſo coincident with the fragment quoted by Plutarch from the Pentheus aſcribed to Theſpis, ſeems to warrant the remark before made, which ſuppoſes it to have been fabricated in the academy of Plato: This with the authority of Ariſtoxenus for the general forgery, and Plutarch's aſſertion that tragedy was ſatiric before Phrynichus and Æſchylus, will have its weight againſt the titles of Theſpis's tragedies, as they are given in Suidas; and accordingly I find that the editor of Suidas, commenting upon this very article, in effect admits

admits the error of his author: This argument moreover accounts for the ſilence of Ariſtotle as to Theſpis's tragedies.

I am aware that it has been a queſtion with ſome critics, whether tragedy originated with Theſpis, notwithſtanding the record of the Marmor Chronicon, and Suidas ſtates the pretenſions of Epigenes the Sicyonian prior to Theſpis; but in this he is ſingle and unſupported by any evidence, except what Plato aſſerts generally in his Minos—*That tragedy was extremely antient at Athens, and that it is to be dated neither from Theſpis, nor from Phrynichus*;—Some authorities alſo place Theſpis's firſt tragedy in a higher period than Olymp. lxi. as it ſtands in the Marmor; for Laertius ſays—*That Solon hindered Theſpis from acting his tragedies, believing thoſe feigned repreſentations to be of no uſe.*—And Plutarch tells us—*That Solon ſaw one of Theſpis's plays, but diſliking the manner of it, forbade him to act any more.*—I need not obſerve that this muſt have paſſed before Piſiſtratus eſtabliſhed his tyranny, which did not take place till the laſt year of Olymp. liv. but if theſe facts be admitted, they ſeem to be deciſive as to the

the tragedy's being alluſive to Bacchus and the Satyrs in its firſt inſtance at leaſt; becauſe it can hardly be ſuppoſed that ſo profeſt an admirer of Homer as Solon was known to be, and himſelf a poet, would have objected to any drama formed upon his model.

As to Plato's general aſſertion with reſpect to the high antiquity of the Athenian tragedy, it ſeems thrown out as a paradox, which he does not attempt to illuſtrate or ſupport, and I cannot think it ſtands in the way of Theſpis's pretenſions to be conſidered as the father of tragedy, confirmed by ſo many authorities.

All theſe ſeeming difficulties will be reconciled, if we concur with the beſt opinions in the following particulars, viz. that tragedy, which was concerned about Bacchus and the Satyrs, was in no inſtance committed to writing: That Theſpis's firſt tragedy, which Solon ſaw and diſliked, was of this unwritten and ſatyric ſort: That in proceſs of time the ſame author actually wrote tragedy, and firſt acted it on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. within the æra of Piſiſtratus, and ac-

cording to the record of the Marmor Chronicon, ſo often referred to.

I will not diſguiſe that Dr. Bentley, whoſe criticiſm is ſo concluſive for the forgery of thoſe tragedies quoted by Plutarch and enumerated by Suidas, Julius Pollux and Clemens of Alexandria, is of opinion *Theſpis himſelf publiſhed nothing in writing*; but as there are ſo many teſtimonies for his being the father of tragedy in general, and ſome which expreſsly ſay he was the firſt *writer* of tragedy, I hope I ſhall not treſpaſs too far on my reader's patience, if I lay the chief of theſe authorities before him.

The Arundel Marble, which is of date as high as Olymp. cxxix. ſets forth that *Theſpis was the firſt who gave being to tragedy.* The epigram of Dioſcorides, printed in Mr. Stanley's edition of Æſchylus, gives the invention to Theſpis. In the Anthologia there are two epigrams, which expreſsly ſay the ſame; one begins—Θέσπιδος ἕυρεμα τῦτο —the other—Θέσπις ὅδε, τραγίκην ος ἀνέπλασε πρῶτος ἀσιδήν. Plutarch in his Solon ſays—*That Theſpis gave riſe and beginning to the very rudiments of tragedy.* Clemens of Alexandria

Alexandria makes Theſpis the contriver of tragedy, as Suſarion was of comedy. Athenæus ſays both comedy and tragedy were ſtruck out at Icarius, a place in Attica, where Theſpis was born. Suidas records to the ſame effect, and Donatus ſpeaks expreſsly to the point of written tragedy.—*Theſpis autem primas* hæc ſcripta *in omnium notitiâ protulit*.—What Horace ſays of Theſpis in his Art of Poetry, and more particularly in the Epiſtle to Auguſtus, where he claſſes him with Æſchylus and Sophocles, certainly implies that he was a *writer* of tragedy, and is ſo interpreted by Cruquius and the old commentator preſerved in his edition. I ſhall add one circumſtance to the above authorities, which is, that the Chorus alone performed the whole drama, till Theſpis introduced one actor to their relief; this reform could hardly be made, much leſs be recorded by Ariſtotle, unleſs Theſpis had *written* tragedies and publiſhed them to the world.

Upon the whole I incline to conſider Theſpis as the firſt author of the written tragedy, and to place him in Olymp. lxi. From him

tragedy deſcended through Pratinas, Carcinus and Phrynichus to Æſchylus, and this is the firſt age of the tragic drama.

CXXVII.

ABOUT two centuries had elapſed from the date of Theſpis's tragedy to the time when Ariſtotle wrote his poetics; which muſt have been after he quitted the ſervice of Alexander, to whom he ſent a copy of that treatiſe: The chain of dramatiſts from Theſpis to Euripides had been continued in regular ſucceſſion, and it is not to be ſuppoſed, but that he might have given a more particular and methodical account of the firſt inventors of tragedy, if it had fallen within the ſcope of his work; but this being merely critical, he takes his account of tragedy and comedy from Æſchylus and Epicharmus, contenting himſelf with a brief detail of ſuch vague and dubious traditions relative to the firſt inventors, as common fame ſeems to have thrown in his way.

He

He looſely obſerves—*That the people of Megaris claim the invention of comedy; that there is reaſon to think it took its origin in a popular and free form of government, which that of Megaris then was: That Epicharmus the Sicilian was far ſenior to Chionides and Magnes, the firſt Athenian writers of comedy:* —He alſo throws out an idle ſuggeſtion from the etymology of the words *comedy* and *drama*, the former of which he derives from Κώμαι, villages, and the latter from the verb Δρᾶν, ὅτι μιμοῦνται Δρῶντες.—Now the people of Peloponneſus he tells us uſe the words Κώμαι and Δρᾶν in their dialect, whereas the Athenians expreſs themſelves by thoſe of Δήμοι and Πράττειν, and upon this reſts the Peloponneſians' pretenſions to be conſidered as the inventors of the drama: He then refers to what he conſiders as the true ſource and foundation of the drama, the works of Homer: and throwing aſide all others, as tales not worth relating, proceeds to the execution of his plan, viz. The definition and elucidation of the tragic poem.

Theſe ſuggeſtions were thrown out by Ariſtotle for no other purpoſe, as it ſhould

ſeem, but to caſt a ridicule upon every other account of the diſcovery of the drama, but his own; for he might as well have given the invention of comedy to the Megarenſians for their being notorious laughers; Γέλως Μεγαρικός *to laugh like a Megarenſian* being a phraſe in vulgar uſe with the Athenians; nay indeed he might have gone a ſtep further and given them tragedy alſo, for *Megarenſian tears* were as proverbial as *Megarenſian laughter*; but a true Athenian would have anſwered, that the former alluded only to the onions, which their country abounded in, and was applied in ridicule of thoſe who counterfeited ſorrow: In ſhort the Megarenſians ſeem to have been the butts and buffoons of the Athenians, and held in ſovereign contempt by them. As for the Peloponnéſian etymologies, Ariſtotle muſt have known that neither the one nor the other had the leaſt foundation; and that there is not a comedy of Ariſtophanes, in which he does not uſe the verb Δρᾶν frequently and in the mouths of Athenian ſpeakers; in his *Birds* I find it within a few lines of the verb Πρατ̃ειν, and uſed by one and the ſame ſpeaker; I have

no

no doubt the like is true of Κώμαι, but I did not think the ſearch worth following.

Bacchus and the Satyrs were both ſource and ſubject of the firſt drama, and the jocund rites of that deity were celebrated at all times and under all governments with the ſame unreſtrained feſtivity: This celebration was too cloſely interwoven with popular ſuperſtition to be checked by the moſt jealous of tyrants; the privileged ſeaſons of Bacchus were out of the reach of the magiſtrate; nor was the old ſatyrical maſque of the Athenians in Piſiſtratus's time leſs licentious than that of the Megarenſians in their freeſt ſtate; though it ſoon happened that the republic of Megara became an oligarchy, and the monarchy of Athens was converted into a republic.

The manner in which the drama was ſtruck out may naturally be accounted for. The Greeks from early time were in the habit of chanting ſongs and extemporary verſes in the villages in praiſe of Bacchus at the *Trina Dyoniſia*, which times anſwer to March, April, and January; afterwards they performed theſe ſongs or dithyrambs at the Panathenæa, which were celebrated

in the month of Auguſt. The Athenians were of all people living the moſt addicted to raillery and invective; theſe village-ſongs and feſtivities of Bacchus gave a ſcope to the wildeſt extravagancies of mummery and grimace, mixt with coarſe but keen raillery from the labourers and peaſants concerned in the vintage: The women from their carts, maſked and diſguiſed with lees of wine, and men accoutred in rude groteſque habits like ſatyrs, and crowned with garlands of ivy and violets, vented ſuch prompt and irregular ſallies, as their inebriated fancies furniſhed on the inſtant, or elſe rehearſed ſuch little traditional and local ballads in Iambic metre, as were in faſhion at the time; accompanying them with extravagant geſticulations and dances incidental to the ſubject, and ſuitable to the character of the deity they were celebrating.

The drunken feſtivities of the antient Danes, when they ſacrificed to their rural deities—*Annuæ ut ipſis contingeret felicitas, frugumque et annonæ uberrimus proventus*—and the Highland ceremonies and libations of the *Bel-tein* are of this character.

The

The Athenian calendar was crowded with theſe feaſts: Drinking-matches were rewarded with prizes and even crowns of gold; their Phallic ceremonies were of this deſcription: They uſed vehement geſticulations in reading and ſpeaking; their rhapſodiſts carried this habit to exceſs, and in the dithyrambic hymn every outrageous geſture, which enthuſiaſm inſpires, was put in practice: The dithyramb was conceived in a metaphorical inflated ſtile, ſtuffed with an obſcure jargon of ſounding phraſes, and performed in honour of Bacchus.

In theſe dithyrambic verſes and Phallic ſongs we have the foundation of tragedy and comedy; the ſolemn and ſwelling tone of the firſt, and the petulant vivacity of the latter, appoſitely point to the reſpective character of each. The ſatire and ſcurrility they indulged from their vintage waggons, their maſks and diſguiſes in the hairy habits of ſatyrs, their wanton ſongs and dances at the Phallic ceremonies, and the dark bombaſt of the dithyramb, chanted by the rhapſodiſts with every tumid and extravagant action, all together form a compleat outline of the firſt drama: As ſoon as dialogue

and repartee were added, it became to all intents a maſque, and in this ſtate it is diſcovered in very early times throughout the villages of Greece. When it had reached this period, and got ſomething like the ſhape of a drama, it attracted the curioſity of the villagers, who in reward for their amuſement in the ſpectacle decreed a prize to the performance agreeable to the object in view and the means of the ſpectators; this prize conſiſted of a caſk of wine, and the performance before named ſimply *Comœdia* or the *village-ſong*, was thenceforward called *Trugœdia*, or the *ſong for the caſk*, compounded of τρύγα and ᾠδή.

Theſe names are deſcriptive of the drama in its progreſſive ſtages from a ſimple *village-ſong*, till it took a more complicated form by introducing the Satyrs, and employing the chorus in recitation through a whole fable, which had a kind of plot or conſtruction, though certainly not committed to writing. In this ſtage, and not before, the prize of *the caſk of wine* was given, and thence it proceeded to attract not the huſbandmen and labourers only but the neighbours of better degree. The drama under the deſig-

nation

nation of *Trugœdia* was ſatyric, and wholly occupied in the praiſe of Bacchus; it was unwritten, jocoſe, and confined to the villages at the ſeaſons of the *Trina Dionyſia*; but after a prize however inconſiderable had been given, that prize created emulation, and emulation ſtimulated genius.

The village bards now attempted to enlarge their walk, and not confining their ſpectacles merely to Bacchus and the Satyrs began to give their drama a ſerious caſt, diverting it from ludicrous and laſcivious ſubjects to grave and doleful ſtories, in celebration of illuſtrious characters amongſt their departed heroes; which were recited throughout by a chorus, without the intervention of any other characters than thoſe of the Satyrs, with the dances proper thereunto.

This ſpur to emulation having brought the drama a ſtep forward, that advance produced freſh encouragement, and a new prize was now given, which ſtill was, in conformity to the ruſtic ſimplicity of the poem and its audience, a *Goat*, τράγος, a new prize created a new name, and the ſerious drama became diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Tragœdia*, or

the ſong for the goat: Thus it appears that *Tragedy*, properly ſo called, was poſterior in its origin to comedy; and it is worthy of remark that *Trugœdia* was never applied to the tragic drama, nor *Tragœdia* to the comic: After this comedy loſt its general deſignation of *Trugœdia*, and was called by its original name of *the village-ſong* or *Comœdia*.

The next ſtep was a very material one in point of advance, for the village-poets having been excited by emulation to bring their exhibitions into ſome ſhape and conſiſtence, meditated an excurſion from the villages into the cities, and particularly into Athens: Accordingly in Olymp. liv. *Suſarion*, a native of Icarius, preſented himſelf and his comedy at that capital, rehearſing it on a moveable ſtage or ſcaffold, preſuming on the hope that what had given ſuch delight to the villagers would afford ſome amuſement to the more refined ſpectators in Athens: This was the firſt drama there exhibited, and we ſhould naturally expect that a compoſition to be acted before the citizens of the capital ſhould be committed to writing, if we did not know that the author was on

theſe

theſe occaſions the actor of his own piece; the rude interludes of Bacchus and the Satyrs being introduced upon the ſcene according to their old extemporary manner by the *Sileni* and *Tityri*, whoſe ſongs and dances were epiſodical to the drama: It continued to be the cuſtom for authors to act their own plays in the times of Phrynichus and Æſchylus, and I therefore think it probable Suſarion's comedy was not a *written* drama; and I cloſe with the authorities for Epicharmus being the firſt *writer* of comedy, who, being retained in an elegant court at Syracuſe, chuſing his plots from the *Margites*, and rejecting the mummeries of the Satyrs, would naturally compoſe his drama upon a more regular and elaborate plan.

No. CXXVIII.

In the plan, which I have laid down for treating of the literature of the Greeks, and to which I have devoted part of theſe papers, I have thought it adviſeable for the ſake of perſpicuity to preface the account with

with an abſtract of the Athenian hiſtory, within thoſe ſeparate periods which I mean to review. In conformity to this plan I have already brought down my narration to the death of Piſiſtratus, and this has been followed with a ſtate of the drama at that period: I now propoſe to proceed with the hiſtory to the battle of Marathon incluſive, beyond which I ſhall have no occaſion to follow it, and ſhall then reſume my account of the literature of the Greeks, which will comprehend all the dramatic authors, both tragic and comic, to the death of Menander.

At the deceaſe of Piſiſtratus the government of Athens devolved quietly upon Hipparchus, who aſſociated his brother Hippias with him in power. Piſiſtratus had two other ſons by a ſecond wife, who were named Jophon and Theſſalus; the elder died in his father's life-time, and the other, who was of a turbulent and unruly ſpirit, did not long ſurvive him.

Hipparchus was not leſs devoted to ſcience and the liberal arts than his father had been; The famous Phæa, who had perſonated Minerva, ſhared his throne, and though he

communicated with his brother Hippias on matters of government, and imparted to him ſo great a portion of authority, that they were jointly ſtiled Tyrants of Athens, yet it ſeems evident that the ſupreme power was actually veſted in Hipparchus; and it is extraordinary, for the ſpace of fourteen years, until his death, his government was undiſturbed by any diſagreement with his brother or complaint from his ſubjects.

The moſt virtuous citizens of Athens, in the freeſt hours of their republic, look back upon this reign as the moſt enviable period in their hiſtory. Plato himſelf aſſerts, that all the fabulous felicity of the golden reign of Saturn was realized under this of Hipparchus: Thucydides gives the ſame teſtimony, and ſays that his government was adminiſtered without envy or reproach: The tradition of the golden days of Hipparchus was delivered down through many generations, and became proverbial with the Athenians. A prince, who had deſerved ſo well of letters, was not likely to be forgotten by poets, hiſtorians, or philoſophers; but ſuch was the public tranquillity under his adminiſtration, that the patriots and declaim-

ers

ers for freedom in the moſt popular times have not ſcrupled to acknowledge and applaud it.

Hipparchus not only augmented the collection of books in the public library, but engaged ſeveral eminent authors to reſide at Athens: He took Simonides of Ceos into his pay at a very high ſtipend, and ſent a fifty-oared galley for Anacreon to Teos, inviting him with many princely gifts to live at his court: He cauſed the poems of Homer to be publicly recited at the great aſſembly of the Panathenæa, and is generally ſuppoſed to have ſuggeſted the plan of collecting the ſcattered rhapſodies of the Iliad and Odyſſey, ſo happily executed by his father. His private hours he devoted to the ſociety of men of letters, and on theſe occaſions was accompanied by Simonides the lyric poet, Onomacritus, Anacreon and others. He did not confine his attention to the capital of his empire, but took a method, well adapted to the times he lived in, of reforming the underſtandings of his more diſtant and leſs enlightened ſubjects in the villages, by erecting in conſpicuous parts of their ſtreets or market-places ſtatues of the god Mercury,

Mercury, placed upon terms or pedeſtals, on which he cauſed to be inſcribed ſome brief ſentence or maxim, ſuch as—*Know thyſelf*—*Love juſtice*—*Be faithful to thy friend*—and others of the like general utility.

It is not eaſy to deviſe a project better calculated for the edification of an ignorant people than theſe ſhort but comprehenſive ſentences, ſo eaſy to be retained in the memory, and which, being recommended both by royal and divine authority, claimed univerſal attention and reſpect.

This excellent and moſt amiable prince was aſſaſſinated by Harmodius and Ariſtogiton, and a revolution being in the end effected favourable to the popular government of Athens, the aſſaſſins were celebrated to all poſterity as the aſſerters of liberty and the deliverers of their country. Of all the rulers of mankind, who have fallen by the hand of violence, how few have been ſacrificed in the public ſpirit of juſtice, and how many have fallen by the private ſtab of revenge! When we contemplate the elder Brutus brandiſhing the dagger of Lucretia, we cannot help recollecting that Tarquinius Superbus had murdered his brother. Hipparchus

parchus is ſaid to have put an affront upon Harmodius's ſiſter by diſmiſſing her from a religious proceſſion, in which ſhe was walking at the feſtival of the Panathenæa: Harmodius was the handſomeſt youth in Attica, and the prince is by the ſame account charged with having conceived an unnatural paſſion for him, in which he was repulſed. If this account were to be credited in the whole, it would be an incident of ſo unmanly a ſort on the part of Hipparchus, as to leave an everlaſting mark of diſgrace upon a character otherwiſe meritorious.

The general prevalence of a turpitude, which neither the religion nor the laws of Greece actually prohibited, may induce our belief of the charge againſt Hipparchus, as far as concerns Harmodius; but the ſuppoſed inſult to the ſiſter is irreconcileable to his character. It were far more natural to ſuppoſe his reſentment ſhould have been pointed againſt Ariſtogiton, who was the favorite of Harmodius: ſuch circumſtances as we have now related would have carried their own confutation upon the face of them, even though hiſtorians had not greatly varied in their accounts of the tranſaction;

but

but when ſo reſpectable an author as Plato gives the narrative a turn entirely oppoſite to the above, whilſt modern hiſtorians have only retailed vulgar errors without examining teſtimonies of better credit, I hope I may be allowed the equitable office of ſumming up the evidences in this myſterious tranſaction, for the purpoſe of reſcuing a moſt amiable character from miſrepreſentation.

Plato in his Hipparchus ſays—*That the current account above given was not the account believed and adopted by people of the beſt condition and repute; that the inſult vulgarly ſuppoſed to have been put upon the ſiſter of Harmodius by Hipparchus was ridiculous and incredible upon the face of it; that Harmodius was the diſciple of Ariſtogiton, a man of ordinary rank and condition; that there was a mutual affection between the pupil and his maſter; that they had admitted into their ſociety a young Athenian of diſtinction, whoſe name had eſcaped his memory, of whom they were very fond, and whom they had by their converſation and inſtructions impreſſed with high ideas of their talents and erudition; that this young Athenian having found acceſs to the perſon of Hipparchus,*

attached

attached himself to his society, and began to fall off from his respect for his former preceptors, and even treated their inferiority of understanding with contempt and ridicule; that thereupon they conceived such hatred and resentment against the prince for this preference shewn by their pupil for his company, and for the method he had taken of mortifying their vanity, that they determined upon dispatching Hipparchus by assassination, which they accordingly effected.

Justin gives a different account and says —*That the affront was put upon the sister of Harmodius, not by Hipparchus but by his brother Diocles; that Harmodius with his friend Aristogiton entered into a conspiracy for cutting off all the reigning family at once, and pitched upon the festival of the Panathenæa as a convenient time for the execution of their plot, the citizens being then allowed to wear arms; that the complete execution of their design was frustrated by one of their party being observed in earnest discourse with Hippias, which occasioned them to suspect a discovery, and so precipitated their attack before they were ready; that in this attack however they chanced upon Hipparchus, and put him to death.*

There are other accounts still differing from

from theſe, but they have no colour of probability, and only prove an uncertainty in the general ſtory.

Plutarch relates—*That Venus appeared to Hipparchus before his aſſaſſination in a dream, and from a phial, which ſhe held in her hand, ſprinkled his face with drops of blood.* Herodotus alſo ſays—*That he was warned by a viſion on the eve of his murder, being addreſſed in ſleep by a man of extraordinary ſtature and beauty, in verſes of an enigmatical import, which he had thoughts of conſulting the interpreters upon next morning, but afterwards paſſed it off with contempt as a vapour of the imagination, and fell a ſacrifice to his incredulity.*

This at leaſt is certain, that he governed the capricious inhabitants of Attica with ſuch perfect temper and diſcretion, that their tranquillity was without interruption; nor does it appear that the people, who were erecting ſtatues and trophies to his murderers, in commemoration of the glorious re-eſtabliſhment of their freedom, could charge him with one ſingle act of oppreſſion; and perhaps if Hippias, who ſurvived him, had not galled them with the yoke of his ty-

ranny

ranny during the few years he ruled in Athens after the death of Hipparchus, the public would not have joined in ſtiling thoſe aſſaſſins the deliverers of their country, who were known to be guided by no other motives than private malice and reſentment.

Harmodius was killed on the ſpot; Ariſtogiton fled and was ſeized in his flight. The part, which Hippias had now to act, was delicate in the extreme; he was either to puniſh with ſuch rigour, as might ſecure his authority by terror, or endear himſelf to the people by the virtue of forbearance: He had the experience of a long adminiſtration, conducted by his brother on the mildeſt and moſt merciful principles; and if theſe aſſaſſins had been without accomplices, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe he would not have reverſed a ſyſtem of government, which had been found ſo ſucceſsful; but as it appeared that Harmodius and Ariſtogiton were joined by others in their plot, he thought the Athenians were no longer to be ruled by gentle means, and that no other alternative remained, but to reſign his power, or enforce it with rigour.

No. CXXIX.

HIPPIAS began his meaſures by putting Ariſtogiton to the torture; he ſeized the perſon of Leæna a courtezan, who was in the ſecret of the conſpiracy, but whilſt he was attempting to force her to a confeſſion, ſhe took the reſolute method of preventing it by biting off her tongue. Ariſtogiton, with revengeful cunning, impeached ſeveral courtiers and intimates of the tyrant. Athens now became a ſcene of blood; executions were multiplied, and many principal citizens ſuffered death, till the informer, having ſatiated his vengeance upon all who were obnoxious to him or friendly to Hippias, at length told the tyrant that he had been made the dupe of falſe accuſations, and triumphed in the remorſe that his confeſſion occaſioned: Some accounts add that he deſired to whiſper to Hippias, and in the act ſuddenly ſeized his ear with his teeth, and tore it from his head.

Hippias henceforward became a tyrant in the worſt ſenſe of the word; he racked the

the people with taxes, ordered all the current coin into the royal coffers upon pretence of its debaſement, and for the period of three years continued to oppreſs the ſtate by many grievous methods of exaction and miſrule. His expulſion and eſcape at length ſet Athens free, and then it was that the Athenians began to celebrate the action of Harmodius and Ariſtogiton with rapture and applauſe; from this period they were regarded as the ſaviours of their country; a public edict was put forth, directing that no ſlave, or perſon of ſervile condition, ſhould in future bear the names of theſe illuſtrious citizens; aſſignments were made upon the Prytaneum for the maintenance of their deſcendants, and order was given to the magiſtrate ſtiled Polemarchus to ſuperintend the iſſue of the public bounty; their poſterity were to rank in all public ſpectacles and proceſſions as the firſt members of the ſtate, and it was delivered in charge to the ſuperintendants of the Panathenæa, that Harmodius and Ariſtogiton ſhould be celebrated in the recitations chaunted on that ſolemnity. There was a popular ode or ſong compoſed for this occaſion, which was conſtantly

conſtantly performed on that feſtival, and is ſuppoſed to have been written by Calliſtratus: It grew ſo great a favourite with the Athenians, that it became a general faſhion to ſing it at their private entertainments; ſome fragments of the comic poets are found to allude to it, and ſome paſſages in the plays of Ariſtophanes. It is a relick of ſo curious a ſort, that, contrary to the practice I ſhall uſually obſerve, I ſhall here inſert it in the original with a tranſlation.

Φίλταθ' Ἁρμόδιε, ἔτω τέθνηκας·
Νήσοις δ' ἐν μακάρων σέφασιν εἶναι,
Ἴναπερ ποδώκης Ἀχιλλέυς
Τυδείδην τέ φασι τὸν ἐσθλὸν Διομήδεα·

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
Ὥσπερ Ἁρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτ' Ἀθηναίης ἐν θυσίαις
Ἄνδρα τύραννον Ἵππαρχον ἐκτανέτην·

Ἀεὶ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ' αἶαν
Φίλταθ' Ἁρμόδιε καὶ Ἀριστόγειτον,
Ὅτε τὸν τύραννον κτανέτην,
Ἰσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποιησάτην.

He is not dead, our beſt belov'd
Harmodius is not loſt,
But with Troy's conquerors remov'd
To ſome more happy coaſt.

Bind then the myrtle's myſtic bough,
And wave your ſwords around,
For ſo they ſtruck the tyrant low,
And ſo their ſwords were bound.

Perpetual objects of our love
The patriot pair ſhall be,
Who in Minerva's ſacred grove
Struck and ſet Athens free.

The four laſt lines of this ode are quoted by Athenæus, and I alſo find amongſt the adulatory verſes made in commemoration of theſe illuſtrious tyrannicides, a diſtich written by Simonides of Ceos, congratulating with the Athenians on their delivery from the tyranny of Hipparchus: This poet is made famous to poſterity for his memory, which was almoſt miraculous; it is to be lamented that it ſhould fail to remind him of ſuch a patron and benefactor. The lines are not worth tranſlating; the author and the ſubject reflect no honour upon each other.

The firſt ſtatues, which the Athenian artiſts

artiſts ever caſt in metal, were the brazen ſtatues erected in honour of Harmodius and Ariſtogitón, in the firſt year of Olymp. lxviii. thirteen years after the murder of Hipparchus, when Iſagoras was archon, and in the memorable æra of Rome, when Tarquinius Superbus was dethroned and expelled: They were conſpicuouſly placed in the forum of Athens, and it was a curious event, after the revolution of five centuries, that the ſtatue of the younger Brutus, when he had killed Cæſar, was placed between theſe very ſtatues, erected in the year when his anceſtor expelled the Tarquins: They were the workmanſhip of Antenor; and Xerxes, when he plundered Athens, removed them out of Greece, from other motives probably than of reſpect to their intrinſic merit: they were in ſucceeding time reſtored to the city, but whether by Alexander after his defeat of Darius, by Antiochus, or by the munificence of Seleucus, authorities are not agreed; I am inclined to think they were given back by Seleucus. There were two others of the ſame materials afterwards caſt by Critias, and again two others, the workmanſhip of the celebrated Praxiteles. Pliny

ſays theſe laſt-mentioned ſtatues were of conſummate beauty and excellence, and there is reaſon to think they were the firſt performances of that great maſter in metal. The honour of a ſtatue in braſs was rarely decreed by the Athenians to any of their moſt illuſtrious citizens, and few other inſtances occur, except one to Solon, and one to Conon for his ſervices againſt the Lacedæmonians. The expedient made uſe of to perpetuate the heroic conſtancy of Leæna was ingenious, for as it was not fitting to erect a public ſtatue to a courtezan, they deviſed the figure of a lioneſs in alluſion to her name, which they caſt in braſs, and without a tongue, in memory of the reſolute method ſhe had taken to prevent confeſſion; this figure was placed in the porch of the citadel, where it kept its ſtation for many generations.

Piſiſtratus and his ſons maintained their uſurpation during a period of ſixty-eight years, including thoſe of Piſiſtratus's receſſions from Athens: Had Hippias ſhared the fate of his brother, their annals would have been unſtained by any other act of violence or injuſtice, except that of reviving a regal authority,

authority, which by gradual revolutions had been finally aboliſhed. The meaſures of Hippias during the time he reigned alone, which ſcarce exceeded three years, blaſted the merits of his predeceſſors, and embittered the minds of the Athenians againſt his family to the lateſt poſterity.

Cliſthenes and Iſagoras, two rich and leading citizens, finding themſelves unſafe under his government, left Athens and took ſhelter amongſt the Phocians. They were in fact no leſs ambitious than himſelf, turbulent partiſans, and though they proved the inſtruments of extricating their country from his tyranny, they were no more actuated by a pure love of liberty, as a general principle, than Harmodius and his accomplice were, when they aſſaſſinated Hipparchus.

The ſtate of Lacedæmon both in point of reſource and of its alliances, was at this time in condition to aſſume a leading ſhare in the affairs of Greece, and it was the firſt object of Cliſthenes and Iſagoras to engage the Lacedæmonians in their party for the emancipation of Athens; to carry this point with a people, ſo jealous of the Athenian greatneſs, required ſome engine of perſua-

ſion more powerful than philanthropy or the dictates of common juſtice; the Temple of Delphi opened a reſource to them, and by a ſeaſonable bribe to the Pythia they engaged her to give ſuch reſponſes to her Lacedæmonian clients on all occaſions, as ſhould work upon their ſuperſtition to accord to their wiſhes.

The plot ſucceeded, and an expedition was ſet on foot for the expulſion of Hippias, ſanctified by the authority of Apollo, but it miſcarried; the effort was repeated, and when things were in that doubtful poſture as ſeemed to menace a ſecond diſappointment, chance produced the unexpected ſucceſs. Hippias and his adherents, foreſeeing that the capital would be inveſted, ſent their women and children to a place of better ſecurity, and the whole party fell into the hands of the enemy. Such hoſtages brought on a treaty, and the parent conſented to renounce his power for the redemption of his children; Hippias upon this retired from Athens to the court of his kinſman Hegeſiſtratus, in the city of Sigeum, in the Troade on the Aſiatic coaſt.

No. CXXX.

CLISTHENES and Iſagoras had now effected a complete revolution in favour of liberty, but being men of ambitious ſpirit and of equal pretenſions, the ſtate was ſoon thrown into freſh convulſion by their factions. Cliſthenes made his court to the people, Iſagoras again had recourſe to the Lacedæmonians.

Lacedæmon, always diſpoſed to controul the growing conſequence of her neighbours, and ſenſible of the bad policy of her late meaſures, had opened her eyes to the folly of expelling Hippias upon the forged reſponſes of the Pythia, of whoſe corruption and falſe dealing ſhe had now the proofs: ſhe complied with the requiſitions of Iſagoras ſo far as related to her interference at large, but in the mode of that interference ſhe by no means met his wiſhes, for it was immediately reſolved to invite Hippias into Sparta, where he was publicly acknowledged and received, and a herald ſent to Athens with a haughty meſſage to Cliſthenes and his party. The Athenians, intimidated

midated and divided, threw themſelves upon new and deſperate reſources, ſending an embaſſy, or rather petition, to the Perſian ſatrap Artaphernes, brother of the reigning king Darius, and governor of Lydia.

The Perſian had not at this time ever heard the name of Athens, and peremptorily demanded homage; the ambaſſadors yielded to the demand, but the ſtate revoked it at their return with indignation; for the Corinthians had in the mean time taken meaſures very favourable to their intereſts, by ſeparating from the Lacedæmonian alliance, and proteſting ſtrongly againſt the propoſal of reſtoring Hippias; their oppoſition ſeems to have been founded in principle, having lately experienced a tyranny of the ſame ſort in their own perſons, and they carried their point by compelling Hippias to return in deſpair to Sigeum, from whence he betook himſelf to Lampſacus, where he began to cabal in the court of Æantides the tyrant, who was in great favour with the Perſian monarch. By this channel Hippias introduced himſelf to Darius, and with all the inveteracy of an exiled ſovereign, not abated by age or length of abſence, became a prin-

a principal inſtrument for promoting his expedition into Greece, which concluded in the memorable battle of Marathon, at which he was preſent, twenty years after his expulſion.

It was fortunate for the liberties of Athens, that when ſhe ſent her embaſſy to Artaphernes, he required as an indiſpenſable condition of his aid that Hippias ſhould be re-eſtabliſhed in his tyranny. A more dangerous ſtep could not have been reſolved upon than this of inviting the aſſiſtance of the Perſian, and in this applauded æra of liberty it is curious to remark ſuch an inſtance of debaſement, as this embaſſy into Lydia: The memory however of paſt oppreſſion was yet too freſh and poignant to ſuffer the Athenians to ſubmit to the condition required, and nothing remained but to prepare themſelves to face the reſentment of this mighty power: With this view they gave a favourable reception to Ariſtogaras the Mileſian, who was canvaſſing the ſeveral ſtates of Greece to ſend ſupplies to the Ionians, then on the point of falling under the dominion of Perſia: Lacedæmon had refuſed to liſten to him, and peremptorily

diſmiſſed him out of their territory: From Athens he obtained the ſuccours he ſolicited, in twenty gallies well manned and appointed: The Athenian forces, after ſome ſucceſsful operations, ſuffered a defeat by ſea, and the breach with Perſia became incurable. Before the ſtorm broke immediately upon Athens, the Perſian armies were employed againſt the frontier colonies and iſlands of Greece with uninterrupted ſucceſs: They defeated the Phœnician fleet and reduced Cyprus; many cities on the Helleſpontic coaſt were added to their empire; in the confines of the Troade ſeveral places were taken; impreſſions were made upon Ionia and Æolia by the forces of Artamenes and Otanes, and in further proceſs of the war the rich and beautiful city of Miletus was beſieged and taken, and the inhabitants of both ſexes removed into the Perſian territory, and colonized upon new lands: The iſles of Chios, Leſbos, and Tenedos ſhared the ſame fate, and not a city in Ionia, that had been involved in the defection, but was ſubjected in its turn: In the Helleſpont and Propontis every thing on the European ſhore was reduced, together with the important

portant ſtation of Chalcedon; the like ſucceſs followed their arms in the Thracian Cherſoneſus. Theſe operations were ſucceeded by the next year's campaign under the conduct of Mardonius, the ſon of a ſiſter of Darius, a young and inexperienced general; and the check, which the power of Perſia received this year by the wreck and diſperſion of their fleet off the coaſt of Macedonia, under Mount Athos, in the Singitic bay, afforded the firſt ſeaſonable reſpite from the ill fortune of the war.

At length the formidable torrent, which had ſo long threatened Athens at a diſtance, ſeemed ready to burſt upon her, and ſurely a more unequal conteſt never occupied the attention of mankind. Mardonius, who had been ſo unſucceſsful in his firſt campaign, was now ſuperſeded, and the vaſt army of Perſia was put under the joint command of Datis a Mede, and the younger Artaphernes, nephew to king Darius and ſon to the Prefect of Lydia. Theſe commanders purſued a different route by ſea from what Mardonius had taken, avoiding the unlucky coaſt of Macedonia, and falling upon Eubœa in the neighbourhood of At-

tica by a ſtrait courſe through the Ægean Sea. Having reduced the city of Caryſtus, they laid ſiege to Eretria the capital of Eubœa; the Athenians had reinforced the garriſon with four thouſand troops; but although the Eretrians for a time ſtood reſolutely to the defence of their city, it was given up by treachery on the ſeventh day, and pillaged and deſtroyed in a moſt barbarous manner, the very temples being involved in the common ruin and conflagration.

Having ſtruck this ſtroke of terror under the very eye of Athens, the Perſians embarked their troops, and paſſing them over the narrow channel, which ſeparates Attica from Eubœa, landed for the firſt time on Athenian ground, and encamped their vaſt army upon the ſandy plain of Marathon.

Hippias, who had been now twenty years in exile, and in whoſe aged boſom the fires of ambition were not yet extinguiſhed, accompanied the Perſian forces into his native country, and according to the moſt probable accounts was ſlain in action. If any death can be glorious in a guilty cauſe, this of Hippias may be ſo accounted; to have brought three hundred thouſand men in

arms,

arms, after a career of victory, landed them on the Athenian territory, and there to have put the very exiſtence of his country to the iſſue of a combat, was an aſtoniſhing effort both of mind and body, at a period of life which human nature rarely attains to. Ten thouſand Greeks under the command of Miltiades diſcomfited this overgrown hoſt in a pitcht battle upon an open plain, where all the Perſian numbers could act; but it has often happened that a ſmall band of diſciplined warriors have worſted an irregular multitude, how great ſoever. The army of Darius was broken and repulſed; ſix thouſand were left on the field, and the fugitives returned into Aſia overwhelmed with ſhame and diſappointment.

This memorable day eſtabliſhed the liberty and the glory of Athens, and from this we are to look forward to the moſt illuminated age in the annals of mankind. Though Hippias had ſeveral children, who ſurvived him, yet as his deſcendants never gave any further diſturbance to the liberties and conſtitution of Athens, we are henceforward to conſider the race of Piſiſtratus as hiſtorically extinct.

The friend of freedom, who reviews them as tyrants, will diſmiſs them with reproach; we, who have regarded them only as patrons of literature, may take leave of them with a ſigh.

No. CXXXI.

Graiis ingenium; Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Muſa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.
(HORAT.)

THE advances, which the drama had made within the period now reviewed, were conſiderable; for the tragic poets Pratinas, Chærilus, Phrynichus and Æſchylus were in poſſeſſion of the ſtage, whilſt Epicharmus and Phormis in Sicily, Chionides, Dinolochus, Evetes, Euxenides, Mylus and others in Attica, were writing comedy. Bacchus and his Satyrs were expelled, and a new ſpecies of compoſition, built upon ſhort fables ſelected from the poems of Homer, ſucceeded to the village maſque, and numbers of ingenious competitors began to apply themſelves to the work.

Theſpis

Theſpis had been acting tragedies, but Theſpis was one of thoſe early dramatiſts, who come under the deſcription of Οι περι Διονυσον, *writers about Bacchus.*

Pratinas ſucceeded Theſpis, and wrote fifty tragedies, if they may be ſo called, when two and thirty of the number were *ſatyric*, or alluſive to the Satyrs. He was a Peloponneſian of the celebrated city of Phlius, but reſorted to Athens for the purpoſe of repreſenting his dramas: He entered the liſts with Chærilus and Æſchylus about the time of Olymp, lxx. ſome years antecedent to the battle of Marathon: He bore away the prize from his competitors with one compoſition only; on all other occaſions he ſaw the palm decreed to the ſuperior merit or better intereſt of his rivals.

Plays were ſtill exhibited upon ſcaffolds or in booths, where the ſpectators as well as the performers were placed, till upon the repreſentation of one of Pratinas's tragedies the ſcaffolding broke down under the weight of the crowd, and much miſchief enſued upon the accident: From this time the Athenians ſet about building a theatre in proper form and of more ſolid materials,

and

and the drama, like the edifice, aſſumed a more dignified character and a better conſtruction.

Pratinas ſtruck out a conſiderable improvement in the orcheſtral part of his drama, by revoking the cuſtom of allowing the minſtrels to join in the chaunt or ſtrain with the chorus, and ſuffering them only to accompany with their pipes: The recitative was by this alteration given more diſtinctly to the audience, and the clamorous confuſion of voices avoided: The people however, not yet weaned from their old prejudice for the noiſy Bacchanalian ſongs of their village maſques, oppoſed themſelves violently againſt this refined innovation, and the whole theatre was thrown into confuſion, when in the midſt of the tumult Pratinas appeared on the ſtage in perſon, and in a kind of Salian ſong, accompanied with dancing, addreſſed his audience to the following effect.

PRATINAS.

WHAT means this tumult? Why this rage?
What thunder ſhakes th' Athenian ſtage?
'Tis frantic Bromius bids me ſing,
He tunes the pipe, he ſmites the ſtring;

The

The Dryads with their chief accord,
Submit and hail the drama's lord.
Be ſtill! and let diſtraction ceaſe,
Nor thus prophane the Muſe's peace;
By ſacred fiat I preſide
The minſtrel's maſter and his guide;
He, whilſt the chorus-ſtrains proceed,
Shall follow with reſponſive reed;
To meaſur'd notes whilſt they advance,
He in wild maze ſhall lead the dance:
So generals in the front appear,
Whilſt muſic echoes from the rear.
Now ſilence each diſcordant ſound!
For ſee, with ivy chaplet crown'd,
Bacchus appears! He ſpeaks in me——
Hear, and obey the god's decree!

(Ex Athenæo.)

Phrynichus, the tragic poet, was the ſon of Melanthus and the diſciple of Theſpis: Suidas thinks there was another of the name, ſon of Chorocles, who alſo wrote tragedies, but there is reaſon to think he is in an error. This Phrynichus firſt introduced the meaſure of tetrametres; this he did becauſe the trochaic foot is moſt proper for dancing, and the drama of this age was accompanied with dances characteriſtic and explanatory of the fable. There were maſters profeſſedly for the purpoſe of compoſing and teaching theſe dances, and in ſome inſtances the

the author performed in perſon; hence it was that the early dramatiſts were called Ὀρχηστικοὶ, or *Dancers*. When tragedy was in a more improved ſtate, and the buſineſs was no longer conducted by dance and ſpectacle, but committed to dialogue, they changed the tetrametres to iambics, which Ariſtotle obſerves were fit for declamation rather than ſinging with the accompaniment of the dance.

This author was the firſt who produced the female maſk upon the ſcene; he took upon himſelf the taſk of inſtructing the dancers and performed in perſon; accordingly we find him burleſqued by Ariſtophanes in his laſt ſcene of *The Waſps*, on account of his extravagant geſticulations—*He ſtrikes and flutters*, ſays the old humouriſt Philocleon, *like a cock*; *he capers into the air, and kicks up his heels to the ſtars*: Whilſt Philocleon is capering on the ſtage after this faſhion, the ſon, who is on the ſcene, obſerves—*This is not agility, it is inſanity. It is either the plot of a tragedy*, replies the ſervant, *or the caprice of a madman*; *give him hellebore*; *the man's beſide himſelf.*

Dancing

Dancing was ſo eſſential a part of the firſt ſcenic ſpectacle, and the people were ſo attached to their old Bacchanalian cuſtoms, that the early reformers of the tragic drama found it no eaſy taſk to make the dance accord to the ſubject of the ſcene and weave it into the fable. This was generally underſtood to be done under the direction of the poet, and in many caſes he was principal performer in perſon; but where an author was not competent to this part of his duty, he called in the aſſiſtance of a profeſt ballet-maſter, who formed dances upon the incidents of the drama, and inſtructed the chorus how to perform them. There is a very eminent profeſſor of this art upon record, named *Teleſtes*, who had the honour of a ſtatue decreed to him, which was conſpicuouſly placed within the theatre, whilſt thoſe of the moſt celebrated poets were not admitted to a nearer approach than the ſteps or portico. Theſe dances prevailed till after the time of Æſchylus, when they were finally laughed out of faſhion by the parody of the ſatyrical comedy.

Though the fate of Phrynichus's tragedy on the *Siege of Miletus* has been frequently mentioned

mentioned, I cannot here omit the ſtory. This beautiful city had been lately ſacked by the Perſian troops: it was the capital and pride of Ionia, a very antient colony of the Athenians, ſettled by Neleus, ſon of Codrus, the laſt and moſt beloved of their kings: Of its riches and renown Strabo tells us the account would exceed belief; it had given birth to men illuſtrious for ſcience and for military fame; Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes in ſucceſſion had been natives of Miletus; Hecatæus the hiſtorian was born there, as were his contemporaries Hiſtiæus and Ariſtogaras, celebrated men, who took ſo great a lead in the affairs of the Ionians introductory to the invaſion of the Perſians, and to whoſe conſpicuous talents even Darius himſelf, when exulting at their death, gave the honourable tribute of his applauſe.

Such was the city, upon whoſe deplorable fate Phrynichus founded his tragedy; the ſpectacle diſſolved his audience into tears; the national and affecting ſcene operated on the ſenſibility of the Athenians in ſo ſerious a manner, that the magiſtracy thought it a caſe fit for their interference, and by pub-

lic

lic edict prohibited the author in future to touch upon that melancholy ſubject: Nor was this all, they put a heavy fine upon the poet. His judgment certainly wanted correction; but it ſhould have been the correction of an indiſcretion rather than of a crime: As the tragedy, like its ſubject, is long ſince periſhed, we cannot properly decide upon the ſeverity of the edict; it muſt be owned the event was too recent and domeſtic; the idea of ſuch a city in flames, the deſtruction of its temples and the maſſacre of its inhabitants, many of whom perhaps had friends and relations preſent at the ſpectacle, was not to be ſupported. It is not the province of the drama to attack the human heart with ſuch realities; the whole region of invention is open to its choice, free to work its moral purpoſes by pity or by terror; but if a plot is to be conſtructed upon truth, the tragic hiſtory is to be taken from time far diſtant, or from ſcenes out of the ſpectator's knowledge. *Flectere non frangere* is the poet's motto; if he terrifies, let him not rend the heart; if he ſoftens, let him not ſeduce it: The man, who is melted with pity, becomes as a child, but he is the child of his poet,

and

and has a claim upon him for the protection of a parent.

This author exhibited a famous tragedy, intitled *Pyrrhiciſtæ*, or *The Dance of armed Soldiers:* The Athenians were charmed with the martial manner in which he conducted this ſpectacle, and Ælian ſays they made him their general, and put him at the head of their army for his ſkill and addreſs in the performance: If it were ſo, it would ſeem to have been the fate of Phrynichus to be puniſhed without mercy, and rewarded without merit; but the anecdote does not obtain with good critics, and it is clear that the poet lived in a more early period than Phrynicus the general, for the loweſt date we have of him, whom we are ſpeaking of, is the circumſtance given by Plutarch in his Themiſtocles, viz. That in Olymp. lxxv. 4. Phrynichus bore away the prize with his tragedy (probably *The Phæniſſæ*) in compliment to Themiſtocles, who was at the charge of the repreſentation, and who in commemoration thereof ſet up the following inſcription—*Themiſtocles of the pariſh of Phreari was at the charge; Phrynichus made the tragedy, and Adimantus was archon.*

From

From this play of *The Phæniſſæ* Æſchylus took the deſign of the famous tragedy of *The Perſæ*.

No. CXXXII.

Poſt hunc perſonæ pallæque repertor honeſtæ
Æſchylus et modicis inſtravit pulpita tignis;
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.
(HORAT.)

WE are now to ſpeak of a poet, ſome of whoſe ineſtimable remains are in our hands. Æſchylus was born in the laſt year of Olymp. lxiii. the ſon of Euphorion an Athenian; he was in the flower of manhood at the battle of Marathon, and ſerved with diſtinguiſhed reputation; his three brothers, Aminias, Euphorion and Cynægirus, were in the ſame action, and ſignalized themſelves on that glorious day. In the ſea-fight off Salamis Aminias loſt an arm, and bore away the firſt prize for valour in that well-fought action: It ſo happened at the repreſentation of one of Æſchylus's plays, that the people roſe againſt him on account of ſome

ſome attack he had made upon their ſuperſtitions, and were proceeding to ſtone him to death, when this Aminias, putting aſide his mantle, exhibited his amputated arm, and turned their fury aſide from the devoted poet; an anecdote, which at once demonſtrates their ferocity and their magnanimity.

Æſchylus, though he had juſt reaſon to value himſelf highly on his poetical talents, yet, like Alcæus and Archilocus, continued through life to hold his military character more at heart than his literary one, and directed to be engraved on his tomb-ſtone a diſtich in long and ſhort verſe, in which he appeals *to the field of Marathon and the long-haired Mede* to witneſs to his valour; by the Mede he probably means the general Datis. The perſonal gallantry, for which Æſchylus and his brethren were ſo conſpicuous, gives a ſtrong and manly colouring to his compoſitions; it is the characteriſtic of his genius; and his pen, like his ſword, is a weapon of terror: The ſpectacle, which his drama exhibits, is that of one ſublime, ſimple ſcene of awful magnificence; his ſentiment and ſtile are in uniſon with his ſubject,

ject, and though he is charged with having written his tragedies in a ſtate of inebriety, to which he was in general addicted, ſtill they do not betray the traces of a confuſed imagination, as Sophocles inſinuated, though occaſionally they may of an inflated one; and it was a weakneſs in Sophocles (to give his motive no worſe a name) to pronounce of Æſchylus, *that he did not know what he did, although he did things well*; as if he had written in a ſtate of abſolute intoxication and mental diſability; an imputation which convicts itſelf.

Æſchylus's exceſs was the vice of his time and nation, I might add of his profeſſion alſo as a ſoldier; and one ſhould almoſt ſuſpect that he conſidered it as a becoming quality in a hero, ſeeing that he had the hardineſs to exhibit Jaſon drunk upon the ſcene, an attempt which ſtands recorded as the firſt of the ſort, though afterwards he was followed in it by Epicharmus and Crates, comic poets, and in latter times even by the ſententious Euripides himſelf: In ſhort, the literary annals of Greece are deeply ſtained with this exceſs, and the ſtage at one period was far from diſcouraging it.

Æſchylus not only inſtructed his chorus in the dances incidental to the piece, but ſuperintended alſo and arranged the dreſſes of the performers with the moſt correct preciſion, and this he did in a taſte ſo dignified and characteriſtic, that the prieſts and ſacrificing miniſters of the temple did not ſcruple to copy and adopt his faſhions in their habiliments: He did not indeed perform on the ſtage as Phrynichus did, but he never permitted the intervention of a maſter, as many others did: The dances, which he compoſed for his tragedy of *The Seven Chiefs*, were particularly appoſite to the ſcene, and were performed with extraordinary ſucceſs and applauſe: He brought fifty furies at once on the ſtage in the chorus of his *Eumenides*, and diſplayed them with ſuch accompaniments and force of effect, that the whole theatre was petrified with horror, pregnant women miſcarried on the ſpot, and the magiſtracy interpoſed for the prevention of ſuch ſpectacles in future, and limited the number of the dancers, annexing a penalty to the breach of the reſtriction. Ariſtophanes has an alluſion to the Eumenides of Æſchylus in his comedy of the *Plutus*, (Act ii. Scene

Scene 4.) where Chremylus and Blepſidemus being on the ſcene are ſuddenly accoſted by *Poverty* in the perſon of a ſqualid old woman, and whilſt they are queſtioning who ſhe may be, Blepſidemus cries out—

" Some fury from the ſcenes of Æſchylus,
" Some ſtage Erinnys; look! her very face
" Is tragedy itſelf.

CHREM.

" But where's her firebrand?

BLEPS.

" Oh! there's a penalty for that."

That the poet Æſchylus was of a candid mind appears from his well-known declaration, viz. *That his tragedies were but ſcraps from the magnificent repaſts of Homer*; that he was of a lofty mind is from nothing more evident, than from his celebrated appeal upon a certain occaſion, when the prize was voted to his competitor evidently againſt juſtice—*I appeal to poſterity*, ſays Æſchylus, *to poſterity I conſecrate my works, in the aſſurance that they will meet that reward from time, which the partiality of my contemporaries refuſes to beſtow.*

Though the candour of Æſchylus called

his tragedies fragments or ſcraps from Homer, and ſeemed to think it ſufficient honour to be able to wield with tolerable grace one weapon out of the armoury of this gigantic ſpirit; yet I would ſubmit to the reader's judgment, whether the tragic poem does not demand a ſtronger exertion of the mental faculties, within the compaſs of its compoſition, than the epic poem. In a drama, where every thing muſt be in action, where characters muſt be ſtrongly marked and cloſely compreſſed, the paſſions all in arms, and the heart alternately ſeized by terror and ſubdued by pity, where the diction muſt never ſleep in detail, nor languiſh in deſcription, but be lofty yet not dilated, eloquent but not loquacious, I have no conception how the human genius can be ſtrained to greater energy: At the ſame time it muſt be admitted, that the continuation of exertion, which the epic requires, inferior though it may be in force, falls heavieſt on the poet of that department; the ſcope of his work is much more diffuſed, and hiſtory perhaps preſents ſo few fit ſubjects to his choice, that we cannot wonder at the general predilection of the literary world

world for dramatic compoſition; leaſt of all can we want a reaſon why the Greeks, an animated and ingenious race of writers, addicted to ſpectacle and devoted to muſic and dancing, ſhould fall with ſuch avidity upon the flowery province of the drama.

But when they made it a conteſt as well as a ſtudy, when they hung up wreaths and crowns as the reward of victory, and turned dramatic ſpectacles into a kind of Olympic games, they brought a crowd of competitors to the liſts. The magiſtrate generally, and private citizens in particular caſes, furniſhed the exhibition at an immenſe expence, and with a degree of ſplendor we have little conception of. The happy poet, crowned with the wreath of triumph, preſenting himſelf to the acclamations of a crowded theatre, felt ſuch a flood of triumph, as in ſome inſtances to ſink under the ecſtacy and expire on the ſpot; whilſt on the other hand diſappointment operating upon ſuſceptible and ſanguine minds, has been more than once productive of effects as fatal: Such minds, though they claim our pity, do not merit our reſpect, and it is a conſolation to

reflect, that where there is a genius like that of Æſchylus, there is generally found a concomitant magnanimity, which can diſregard, with conſcious dignity, the falſe misjudging decrees of the vulgar.

The appeal, which Æſchylus made to poſterity, was ſoon verified, for after his death the Athenians held his name in the higheſt veneration, and made a decree for furniſhing the expence of repreſenting his tragedies out of the public purſe; he carried away many prizes during his life, and many more were decreed to his tragedies after his death: A ſtatue was erected in memory of him at Athens, and a picture was painted deſcriptive of his valour in the fight at Marathon.

Amongſt other reaſons ſuggeſted for his leaving Athens, ſome aſſert that he retired in diſguſt at being ſuperſeded in a prize by Sophocles, who was a very young competitor; but a vague aſſertion of this invidious ſort is readily confuted by the character of Æſchylus, to which it is not reconcileable upon any other than the ſtrongeſt authority. It is agreed that he removed to Sicily to the court of king Hiero, where he was very honourably

honourably received, and after three years reſidence died and was buried in a ſumptuous and public manner: The fable of the eagle dropping a tortoiſe on his head, and his being killed by the blow, was probably allegorical, and emblematical of his genius, age and decay. Valerius Maximus however gives the ſtory for truth, and refers to the authorities of Ariſtophanes, Pliny, and Suidas, concluding his account with the following expreſſion—*Eoque ictu origo et principium fortioris tragœdiæ extinctum eſt.* He died at the age of ſixty-nine years, after a life ſpent alternately in great labour and great exceſs. This event took place in the firſt year of Olymp. lxxxi. In Olymp. lxx. when he was between twenty and thirty years old, he conteſted the prize with Pratinas and Chærilus, when Myrus was archon; *Chærilus* was an Athenian, and wrote tragedies to the amount of one hundred and fifty, of all which not even a fragment ſurvives. At the battle of Marathon Æſchylus was thirty-ſeven years old; twelve years after this celebrated action Xerxes paſſed into Greece at the head of his armies, burnt Athens, and carried off the library collected

by Piſiſtratus and his ſons. When Æſchylus was turned of fifty he carried away the prizes with his tragedies of *Phineus*, *The Perſæ*, *Glaucus Potnienſis*, and *The Prometheus*. Three years before his death he performed his *Agamemnon*, and bore away the prize with that, with *The Choephoris*, *The Eumenides* and *The Proteus*, a ſatyric drama, the charges of the theatre being defrayed by Xenocles Aphidneus. If he paſſed into Sicily, therefore, he muſt have left Athens immediately after this ſucceſs, and this is another circumſtance which makes againſt the ſtory of his diſguſt.

At the death of Æſchylus, Sophocles was in his twenty-ſeventh year, and Euripides in his twenty-firſt: Chionides and Dinolochus, writers of the old comedy, flouriſhed in his time; as did the philoſophers Zeno Eleates, Anaxagoras and Parmenides: Socrates was in his twenty-ſecond year when Æſchylus died, and Pindar died two years before him.

No. CXXXIII.

In the *Frogs* of Ariſtophanes three entire acts are occupied by a conteſt between Æſchylus and Euripides for the tragic chair amongſt the departed ſpirits. The matter is put to reference before Bacchus and others, who proceed to a ſolemn hearing of the parties. The author evidently leans to Æſchylus throughout the controverſy, and in the end makes Bacchus give a full deciſion in his favour: The iraſcible proud ſpirit of Æſchylus and the litigious talkative character of Euripides are well marked, and in a peculiar vein of comic humour: The contending poets alternately repeat paſſages in their reſpective prologues and choruſſes, which the other party as conſtantly criticizes and turns to ridicule: Amongſt the many defects which Euripides pretends to diſcover in Æſchylus's dramas, he urges the taciturnity of his principal character.

EURIPIDES.

" Firſt then, he'd muffle up his characters,
" Some Niobe, for inſtance, or Achilles,

" And bring them on the ſtage, their faces hid,
" As mutes; for not a ſingle word they utter'd.

BACCHUS.

" Not they, by Jupiter!

EURIPIDES.

——" Meantime the chorus
" Sang regularly four ſucceſſive ſtrains;
" But they kept ſilence.

BACCHUS.

" And that ſilence truly
" Pleas'd me as much as all our modern ſpeeches.
" ———But tell me to what purpoſe
" This fellow did it?

EURIPIDES.

" From impertience,
" To keep the audience during the performance
" Waiting to hear when Niobe ſhould ſpeak.
" ———Having play'd theſe tricks,
" Juſt as the piece was above half concluded,
" They'd ſpeak perhaps ſome dozen bellowing words,
" Of ſuch high-creſted and terrific form,
" The audience truly could not comprehend them."

(DUNSTER's Tranſlation.)

The decree, which Ariſtophanes makes Bacchus pronounce in favour of Æſchylus, is by implication as deciſive againſt Sophocles as againſt Euripides, for Sophocles declares his acquieſcence under the judgment, if it ſhall be given for Æſchylus, but if otherwiſe he avows himſelf ready to conteſt

conteſt the palm with Euripides: A circumſtance which ſufficiently diſcriminates the modeſt complacency of his character, from the peeviſh diſputatious temper of Euripides: It is at the ſame time an implied confirmation of the pre-eminence of theſe three tragic poets over all other competitors in that department of the drama, and puts Æſchylus at the head of the triumvirate. How they ranked in the judgment of Ariſtophanes is further manifeſt by what he puts in the mouth of Æſchylus after judgment is given for him: He ſays to Pluto—

" Do thou to Sophocles
" Conſign my ſeat, to keep poſſeſſion of it,
" In caſe I ſhould again return; for he
" Doubtleſs comes neareſt me in tragic powers."
(DUNSTER.)

It appears therefore, that although we have few remains of the Greek tragedy, yet they are remains of the beſt maſters. There are authorities which ſay that Æſchylus wrote above one hundred tragedies, and the titles of all theſe have been collected and publiſhed by Meurſius; ſeven only ſurvive; the like number of Sophocles and a few

more of Euripides comprize all the remains of the Greek tragedy now in our poſſeſſion: But although theſe are highly valuable as being ſpecimens of the beſt maſters, it does not follow that they are the beſt, or amongſt the beſt, performances of their reſpective authors: At all events we can judge but in part from ſo ſmall a proportion, and as theſe authors were in the habit of forming their dramas upon plots that were a continuation of the ſame ſtory, it muſt be to the diſadvantage of any one piece, that happens to come down to us diſjunctively, as in the inſtance of the *Prometheus* of Æſchylus, and more which might be named amongſt the remains of the two other ſurviving poets.

We have now Engliſh tranſlations of all the Greek tragedies, and without carrying my remarks any farther than appertains to the poet of whom I am ſpeaking, I ſhould feel it as an injuſtice to the merit of a very able and ingenious contemporary, if I could mention Æſchylus and overlook his tranſlator: A work ſo arduous as that which Mr. Potter has executed, might claim much more indulgence than his performance will ever ſtand in need of; but theſe tranſlations,

could

could they be executed up to the full ſpirit of their originals, can never intereſt an Engliſh reader like his native drama: To the poet they afford a great ſubject for diſplay in odes and choruſſes, and relieve him at the ſame time from the heavieſt part of his work, the labour of the plot; but with the reader, who cannot judge of their orcheſtral accompaniments, they will never ſtand in competition with the activity of the Engliſh drama, its warm and rapid incident, tranſition of ſcene, variety of character, brevity of dialogue, buſy plot and domeſtic fable. A man of genius, who writes for the cloſet, may have a curioſity to build a drama upon Greek conſtruction, but he will hardly ſucceed in an attempt to naturalize it on our ſtage.

No tranſlator can engage with a more difficult original than Æſchylus: Time has thrown ſome ſublimities out of our ſight, and many difficulties in our way by the injuries of the text: The ſtile of his tragedy beſpeaks a fiery and inflated imagination; the time in which he wrote, and his own martial habits, doubtleſs give a colour and character to his diction; perhaps the intemperance

perance in which he indulged may ſometimes give a heat to his fancy more than natural, and there are ſome paſſages of ſo figurative and metaphorical a ſort, that I have been often tempted to ſuppoſe, that his campaigns againſt the Perſians might have tinctured his language with ſomething of the Oriental tone of expreſſion.

Sophocles, in times more pacific, has a ſofter verſification, and a ſtile more ſweet and feeble; of habits and education more effeminate, of a fair and comely perſon, we hear of him dancing naked round a trophy, erected for the victory of Salamis, his lyre in his hand, and his limbs anointed with oil to encreaſe their activity: He ſtudied muſic and the dance under Lampſus, and in both arts was an adept; he danced at the performance of his own *Nauſicaa*, and he accompanied the choruſſes of his *Thamyris* with his voice and harp: Devoted to the fair ſex in the extreme, the ſoftneſs of his natural character is conſpicuous in his writings: his pictures of women are flatteringly drawn, and his ſtile is compared to the honey of the bee for ſweetneſs: The ſenſibility of his mind was extreme; though he lived

lived near an hundred years, old age did not deaden his feelings, for whilſt judgment was paſſing on his *Oedipus Coloneus*, the laſt play he exhibited, his ſpirit was ſo agitated by the anxious ſuſpenſe, that when the prize was at length decreed in his favour, the tumult of paſſion was too violent for his exhauſted frame, and the aged poet expired with joy.

Euripides, on the other hand, was of mean birth, the ſon of a poor woman who ſold herbs, at which circumſtance Æſchylus points when he ſays in the *Frogs*—

O thou from rural goddeſs ſprung!"

He was educated by his father to engage as an athletic in the Eleuſynian and Theſean games; he was alſo a ſtudent in natural philoſophy under Anaxagoras, in rhetoric under Prodicus, and a pupil of Socrates in moral philoſophy. When he began to ſtudy tragedy he ſhut himſelf in a cave, wild and horrid and ſequeſtered from the world, in the iſland of Salamis: He is charged with having a profeſt antipathy to women, and every feature both of nature and education, as now deſcribed, is diſcoverable in his writ-

ings;

ings; his ſentiments breathe the air of the ſchools, his images are frequently vulgar, and his female characters of an unfavourable caſt; he is carping, ſour and diſputatious, and, though he carried away only five prizes out of ſeventy-five plays, he is ſtill indignant, proud and ſelf-aſſuming; his life was full of contention and his death of horror, for he was ſet upon by maſtiffs and killed. He was the friend of Socrates, and groſsly addicted to unnatural paſſion.

No. CXXXIV.

In a ſcene between Xanthias the ſlave of Bacchus, and Æacus, in the comedy of the *Frogs* before mentioned, the latter, upon being aſked why Sophocles did not put in his claim for the tragic chair, replies——

" Not he, by Jove!
" When hither he came down, he inſtantly
" Embrae'd Æſchylus, ſhook him by the hand,
" And in his favour gave up all pretenſions:
" And now, as by Clidemides I'm told,
" He will attend the trial as third man,
" Content

" Content if Æſchylus victorious prove;
" But otherwiſe, has ſaid he'll try his ſkill
" In conteſt with Euripides."
(DUNSTER's Tranſlation.)

The tragedies of Æſchylus have all the marks of an original genius; his ſcene is caſt with an awful and majeſtic grandeur, and he deſigns in the boldeſt ſtile; in ſome ſituations his principal figures are painted with ſuch terrible effect, that I can only liken them to a compoſition, where Spagnolet had drawn the perſons of the damned in tortures, and Salvator Roſa had filled up the ſcenery of Hell in his ſtrongeſt manner. No poet introduces his character on the ſcene with more dignity and ſtage-effect: He is in the practice of holding the ſpectator in ſuſpenſe by a preparatory ſilence in his chief perſon, which is amongſt the moſt refined arts of the dramatic poet: This was well underſtood by our Shakeſpear and ſome others of the old ſchool; on the French ſtage I conceive it is very little in uſe.

In the introductory ſcene of the *Prometheus*, the principal character preſerves a dignified ſilence for a conſiderable ſpace of time, during which all the tremendous machinery

nery incidental to his tortures, is going forward under the ſuperintendance of imaginary beings, and the vengeance of almighty Jupiter in chaining him to a rock, there to languiſh for innumerable ages, is in actual execution. This is a prelude infinitely more dramatic, ſublime and affecting, than if the ſcene had been interwoven with lamentations, cries and complaints, though ever ſo well expreſſed; the picture tells its own tale, and the ſpectacle ſpeaks to the heart without the vehicle of words: It is well obſerved by Mr. Potter, the tranſlator of Æſchylus, that "there is a dignity and even ſublimity in "this ſilence of Prometheus beyond the ex-"preſſion of words; but as ſoon as the in-"ſtruments of tyranny have left him, he "burſts into a ſtrain of pathetic lamentation, "and invokes all nature to atteſt to his un-"deſerved ſufferings."

"Æthereal air, and ye ſwift-winged winds,
"Ye rivers ſpringing from freſh founts, ye waves,
"That o'er th' interminable ocean wreath
"Your criſped ſmiles, thou all-producing earth,
"And thee, bright ſun, I call, whoſe flaming orb
"Views the wide world beneath."——

(POTTER.)

The ſcenery and ſpectacle of the *Prometheus* muſt have been the fineſt that poet ever deviſed; all the characters are ſupernatural beings, and their language is not unworthy of Olympus.

The *Agamemnon* is a wonderful production, and though no other tragedy but this had come down to us from the pen of the author, it would be matter of aſtoniſhment to me that any critic ſhould be found of ſuch proof againſt its beauties, as to lower its author to a compariſon with Sophocles or Euripides; yet ſome there have been, who have reverſed the decree of Bacchus, and given their preference to Sophocles, nay even to Euripides. The ſame management is obſervable in this tragedy upon the introduction of Caſſandra, as we have juſt now remarked in the caſe of *Prometheus:* Agamemnon recommends his captive to the protection of Clytemneſtra; they are left upon the ſcene together; the Queen of Argos ſolicits her to deſcend from her car and enter the palace; the chorus ſecond the invitation; ſhe makes no reply; Clytemneſtra doubts if ſhe ſpeaks the language of Greece, and calls upon her to make ſome acknowledgment

ledgment by ſigns; when this draws nothing from her, ſhe grows exaſperated and exclaims—

" 'Tis frenzy this, the impulſe of a mind
" Diſorder'd; from a city lately taken
" She comes, and knows not how to bear the curb,
" Till ſhe has ſpent her rage in bloody foam:
" But I no more waſte words to be diſdain'd."
(POTTER.)

Caſſandra ſtill is ſilent; when upon the departure of the queen, this gloomy cloud that hung upon the foreground of the proſpect at once diſperſes, and a ſcene of ſuch dazzling ſplendour and ſublimity burſts forth upon the inſtant, as muſt have thrown the theatre into aſtoniſhment; ſeized with the prophetic fury, ſhe breaks out into ſuch guſts and agonies of divination, as can no otherwiſe be deſcribed, but with ſilent wonder how any human imagination could furniſh ſuch ideas, or find words to give them utterance. The chorus I confeſs ſtand the ſhock with wonderful preſence of mind, but the phlegm and apathy of a Greek chorus is proof againſt every thing; though the propheteſs plainly denounces the impending murder of the king by

by Clytemneſtra, and points out the bath as the ſcene of his aſſaſſination, the chorus tamely anſwers—

" To unfold the obſcure oracles of heav'n
" Is not my boaſt.——

(POTTER.)

I need not be reminded that incredulity was annexed by Apollo to the predictions of Caſſandra, and that the plot and cataſtrophe would not admit of precipitation; for I muſt ſtill contend that incredulity itſelf is a good dramatic engine, and if the chorus had not ſtood in his way, would have been otherwiſe managed by the author; but I take the character of a true Greek chorus to be ſuch, that if Apollo himſelf had come in perſon to tell them, that the earth would open and ſwallow them up, if they did not inſtantly remove from the ſpot on which they ſtood, they would have ſtopt to moralize, or hymn an ode, in ſtrophe and antiſtrophe, to Jupiter, or Venus, or the gods below to whom they were deſcending, though the ground was cleaving under their feet—provided, as I before premiſed, that they had the true ſpirit of a Greek chorus in them. To have a genius like this of Æſchylus encumbered

cumbered with a chorus, is as if a millſtone was tied round the pinions of an eagle.

The *Agamemnon* was the laſt tragedy he wrote for the Athenian ſtage; the poet was then turned of ſixty years: The Athenians decreed the prize to him for this ineſtimable performance, which has been the admiration of all ages, and will be to all poſterity.

The tragedy of the *Perſians*, and that alſo of the *Furies*, are a ſtudy for poets and painters; the imagery in both theſe pieces is of a wonderful and ſurpaſſing ſublimity. In the former of theſe every reader muſt be ſtruck with the introduction of the ghoſt of Darius, and the awful rites and incantations that are preparatory to its appearance: The ſudden interruption of the unfiniſhed hymn by the royal ſpectre, the attitude of the proſtrate Satraps, the ſituation of Atoſſa, and the whole diſpoſition of the ſcene, are a combination in point of effect which no dramatic ſpectacle ever exceeded.

In the *Furies* the ſcene preſents to the ſpectator the temple of the Pythian Apollo; the prieſteſs opens the tragedy with a ſpeech from

from the veſtibule; the gates are drawn back and the interior of the fane is diſcovered, the god appears on the ſcene in perſon, Oreſtes is at his feet in a ſupplicating poſture, and the furies to the number of fifty are diſperſed in different attitudes, but all buried in profound ſleep: Apollo addreſſes himſelf to his ſuppliant, and points to the ſleeping furies—

——" See this grieſly troop!
" Sleep has oppreſs'd them, and their baffled rage
" Shall fail, grim-viſag'd hags, grown old
" In loath'd virginity: Nor god, nor man
" Approach'd their bed, nor ſavage of the wilds;
" For they were born for miſchiefs, and their haunts
" In dreary darkneſs, 'midſt the yawning gulfs
" Of Tartarus beneath, by men abhorr'd
" And by th' Olympian gods."

(POTTER.)

Can there be a finer, a more tremendous picture? There can: But it is the genius of Æſchylus muſt heighten it: The ghoſt of Clytemneſtra riſes on the ſcene and completes the horror; ſtained with the blood of her huſband, and gaſhed with wounds inflicted by the parricidal hand of her own ſon, ſhe calls out to the avenging deities—

" What,

" What, can you ſleep? Is this a time t' indulge
" Your indolent repoſe?——
" Hear me, oh hear! 'tis for my ſoul's repoſe
" I plead: rouſe your keen ſenſe, infernal powers!
" 'Tis Clytemneſtra calls you in your dreams."
(POTTER.)

The furies ſcream out in their ſleep, the ſpectre again urges them to rouſe—

" ——And is this all? Awake,
" Ariſe."——
——" With fiery breath
" That ſnuffs the ſcent of blood, purſue this ſon,
" Follow him, blaſt him!"
(POTTER.)

What art! what aggravation in this horrid prelude! what preparation for effect! with what a burſt muſt they have ſprung from their dream!—Well may we give credit to the account of the terrors which they impreſt upon the ſpectators: Their numbers, their attire, their temples wreathed with ſnakes, and their hands armed with flames, the clangor of the orcheſtra, the violence of their motions, their yelling ſcreams, ſeem to empty the whole infernal regions on the ſtage. We muſt take into our recollection alſo, that this ſpectacle was exhibited to a people,

people, who conſidered theſe beings as deities, at whoſe ſhrines they paid divine worſhip, and to whoſe eyes and imaginations this ſnaky attire was wholly new; for it was the bold fancy of the poet, which firſt dreſſed them in this manner, and they have kept the faſhion from that moment to the preſent.

I cannot diſmiſs this tragedy without obſerving that there is a ſhift of the ſcene from Delphi to Athens, which I take to be a ſingle inſtance of the ſort on the Greek ſtage.

The number of the chorus being limited by public edict after the exhibition of this tragedy, it is clear that the tragedy of the *Supplicants* muſt have been ſubſequent to it, inaſmuch as the chorus of Danaides conſiſted of fifty perſons; and as the whole tenor of this ſoft and pathetic drama bears an air of atonement to the ſuperſtition of the vulgar, and is full of pious ſubmiſſion to the will of Jupiter and religious veneration for the gods, it ſeems to me very probable that the poet had a view in this tragedy of the *Supplicants*, of reconciling the people after the offence he had given them on a former occa-

ſion by making too free with the deities, and for which he narrowly eſcaped their reſentment.

As to the tragedy of *The Seven Chiefs againſt Thebes*, it is ſaid to have been the favorite of its author, and we know it has the teſtimony of the critic Longinus. The ſcenery is beautiful; the dialogue characteriſtic and of a martial glow; the armorial bearings charged on the ſhields of the armed chiefs are moſt fancifully deviſed; and the tender contraſt of the perſons of the chorus, compoſed of the daughters of Cadmus, aſſociate every pleaſing and animating contemplation that can meet within the compaſs of one ſimple drama.

I believe there is no antient poet, that bears ſo cloſe a reſemblance in point of genius to any of the moderns, as Æſchylus bears to Shakeſpear: The compariſon might afford a pleaſing ſubject to a man of learning and leiſure: If I was further to compare the relation, in which Æſchylus ſtands to Sophocles and Euripides, with that of Shakeſpear to any of our later dramatiſts, I ſhould be inclined to put Sophocles in the line with Rowe, and Euripides with Lillo.

No. CXXXV.

I SHALL now proceed to lay before the public, ſuch an account as I have been enabled to collect of the ſeveral Greek writers of comedy.

The learned reader needs not to be informed, how little is to be found in Ariſtotle's Poetics on the ſubject of comedy; that treatiſe by no means anſwers to the general profeſſion of its title; if it had come down to us as perfect and entire, as it probably was when the author put the laſt hand to it, and preſented a correct copy of his work to Alexander, we might conclude otherwiſe of it: but to ſpeak of it as it is, we can call it nothing more than a diſſertation upon tragedy, in which many things are evidently out of place and order, ſome no doubt loſt, and others mutilated: It is thus conſidered by the learned commentator Daniel Heinſius, who in his ſupplementary treatiſe annexed to his edition, profeſſedly ſpeaks only of the conſtruction of tragedy, and endeavours with great diligence and perſpicuity to methodize the whole work,

and diſpoſe his author's ſyſtem into ſome order and regularity.

With the exception of a few obvious remarks upon the epic, as tending to illuſtrate the drama, and two or three paſſages where comedy is ſpoken of only as contraſted with tragedy, the whole of this celebrated diſſertation is nothing more than a ſet of rules for the drama, which are mere tranſcripts from the compoſitions of the great writers of the Homeric tragedy, Æſchylus, Sophocles, and Euripides: He analyzes and defines a poem, then actually carried to its perfection; but gives no new lights, no leading inſtructions, for the furtherance and improvement of what had not arrived to the like ſtate of maturity.

With the remains of the three tragic poets above mentioned in our hands, I profeſs I do not ſee how we are edified by Ariſtotle's diſſertation, which offers nothing but what occurs upon the reading of their dramas; unleſs poſterity had ſeen fit to abide by the ſame laws which they obſerved, and the modern tragedy had been made exactly to conform to the Greek model.

Ariſtotle, as we have before remarked,

ſpeaks of nò comedy antecedent to the comedy of Epicharmus: There is reaſon to think that this author did not fall in with the perſonal comedy, in the licentious manner it prevailed upon the Athenian ſtage, even to the time of Ariſtotle; for it was not reformed there, till the perſonal ſatiriſts were awed into better reſpect by the Macedonian princes, who ſucceeded to Alexander; whereas Epicharmus wrote for the court of an abſolute prince.

Now it is remarkable, that Ariſtotle makes no ſtrictures upon the licentiouſneſs of the Athenian comedy, nor offers any rules for the correction of the ſtage, though the ſchools proſcribed it, and the tribunals were at open hoſtility with it. It is plain he ſtates things as they were, not as they ought to have been; for he pronounces of comedy —*that it is a picture of human nature, worſe and more deformed than the original.*

I cannot hold this to be a juſt character of comedy, as it ſtood at the time when Ariſtotle pronounced it: The only entire comedies we have to refer to, are a contradiction to the aſſertion; for no one will contend that the corrupt and abominable

manners of the times in which Ariſtophanes wrote, did not fully warrant the ſeverity of his ſatire, or that his characters of depravity are in general overcharged, *and his pictures of human nature more deformed than their originals.* As for the reſt of the comic fraternity, their fragments only can plead for them; but they are fragments of ſuch a nature, as prove them to have been moraliſts of the ſublimeſt ſort, and they have been collected, tranſlated, and applauded, by the graveſt and moſt ſententious of the Chriſtian writers for many ages. I will venture to ſay, that in theſe ſcattered reliques of the comic ſtage, more uſeful knowledge and good ſenſe, better maxims for right conduct in life, and a more generous diſplay of benevolence, juſtice, public ſpirit, and all the moral virtues of natural religion are to be found, than in all the writings of the philoſophers, which are ſo much more entire.

Socrates, it is true, could hardly be prevailed upon to enter the comic theatre, but I infer very little againſt the poets on that account; Plato, I am aware, though an intimate of Ariſtophanes, baniſhed the drama out of his viſionary republic; but what is

that

that more than to ſay, that if all men were virtuous there would be no need of ſatiriſts? The comic poets in return laſhed the philoſophers over the ſtage, and they had what they merited, the public applauſe on their ſide; the ſchools and academies of ſophiſts furniſhed an inexhauſtible fund for wholeſome ridicule; their contradictory firſt principles, their dæmons and clouds, and water and fire, with all their idle ſyſtems and hypotheſes, their fabulous conceits, dreams and devices to catch the vulgar, and the affected rigour of their manners, whilſt in ſecret they were addicted to the groſſeſt debauchery and impurity, were continual ſubjects of ſatire; and if hypocriſy is not the comic poet's lawful game, what is? There is not a play of Ariſtophanes to be named, in which theſe ſanctified ſinners have not their ſhare in the ridicule; and amongſt the fragments above mentioned, a very large proportion falls to their lot.

Ariſtotle, who had very little feeling for Plato and his academy, or indeed for practical philoſophy in general (which he ſeems to have profeſſed only in oppoſition to Xenocrates) concerned himſelf no further about

the ſtate of the ſtage, than to comment and remark upon the tragedies of the three chief writers above mentioned; and it is humiliating enough to the pride of criticiſm to obſerve, that tragedy, after all his pains to hold it up to the ſtandard of Sophocles and Euripides, ſunk with thoſe authors, and was no more heard of; whilſt comedy, without his help, and in defiance of his neglect, roſe in credit with the world, till it attained perfection under the auſpices of Menander.

I have ſpoken of tragedy as a *written poem* before comedy of the ſame deſcription, becauſe I think that Suſarion did not *write* comedy, though he acted it ſo early as the fiftieth Olympiad; and I alſo think that Theſpis did *write* tragedy in the ſixty-firſt Olympiad, if not ſooner; in other words, although the complexion of the original drama was comic in the moſt extravagant degree, yet it appears probable that tragedy had the ſtart in point of publication. The nature of the firſt comedy, compared with that of the firſt tragedy, ſeems to warrant this opinion; for it is eaſy to ſuppoſe that the raillery and ſatire of the village maſques, which would paſs off at a lawleſs feſtival,

ſpoken

ſpoken off-hand and without the malice of premeditation, would not ſo readily have been committed to writing by the poet, as the tragic drama; which being compoſed in honour of deceaſed heroes, or on religious and grave ſubjects, not only called for greater deliberation on the part of the author, but would alſo be made public without danger or offence.

It now remains to enquire into the chronology of the *written* comedy.

I have already obſerved, that Ariſtotle aſcribes the firſt written comedy to Epicharmus.

Both Ariſtotle and Horace call him a *Sicilian*, but in what particular place he was born is not agreed; ſome contend that he was a Syracuſan, ſome that he was a native of Craſtum, others of Megara in Sicily: Diomedes the grammarian ſays he was born in Cos, and derives the word comedy from the name of that iſland, a derivation that ſets aſide his authority altogether. The father of Epicharmus was named Chimarus, or according to others Tityrus, and his mother Sicida. Cicero in his Tuſculans calls him, *acutum nec inſulſum hominem:*

Demetrius Phaleræus celebrates him for the elegant and appoſite choice of his epithets, on which account the Greeks gave the name of *Epicharmion* to his ſtile, making it proverbial for its beauty and purity. It is difficult to fix the preciſe time when he began to write comedy, eſpecially as he lived to the great age of ninety-ſeven: It is certain however he was ſtill writing in the reign of Hiero, in or about Olymp. LXXIV. at which time Phormis alſo wrote comedy in Sicily; and Chionides, Dinolochus and Magnes, comic poets, flouriſhed at Athens.

Suidas's chronology does not agree with Ariſtotle's, for he makes Chionides antecedent to Epicharmus, and calls him the firſt writer of comedy; adding, that Evetes, Euxenides and Mylus, all Athenians, were his contemporaries; he allows, however, that Epicharmus and Phormis were the firſt writers in the iſland of Sicily; but this is in the vague manner of his dates, and not to be relied upon: He takes no notice of Ariſtotle's expreſs aſſertion, that Epicharmus was long ſenior to Chionides; and yet he might have recollected, that facts are ſo far in favour of Ariſtotle's chronology of theſe poets,

poets, that there is a title upon record of one of Chionides's plays called *The Perſians*, which muſt have been poſterior to the Perſian æra, when it is on all hands agreed that Epicharmus was living.

Amongſt the epigrams of Theocritus, publiſhed by Henry Stevens in 1579, there are ſome lines upon Epicharmus, which appear to have been inſcribed upon the pedeſtal of a ſtatue of braſs, which the Syracuſans had ſet up in his honour as their fellow-citizen: It conſiſts of ten lines in the Doric dialect, which he uſed; it ſettles the point of his birth, expreſsly ſaying he was a Syracuſan, and aſcribes to him the invention of Comedy—

—χὠ ἀνὴρ, ὁ τὰν Κωμωδίαν
Εὑρὼν Ἐπίχαρμος.

"Epicharmus, the man who invented Comedy."

In the concluſion, it celebrates him for the many uſeful maxims which he gave for the inſtruction of youth; but this I am diſpoſed to think may apply to the circumſtance of his having been a ſchoolmaſter at Syracuſe;

for if we are to take our judgment of Epicharmus's drama from his imitator Plautus, perhaps its morality, though not to be overlooked amongſt other excellencies, is nevertheleſs not the moſt ſtriking feature in its character. And though it is probable that Epicharmus did not launch out into that perſonality, which the freer Athenians indulged to ſuch exceſs, yet I can ſuppoſe him to have been not very chaſte in his dialogue, from the anecdote which Plutarch gives us, of his being heavily fined and compelled to manual labour by order of Hiero for certain obſcene jeſts, which he ſuffered to paſs in hearing of his queen: I muſt ground another remark upon this anecdote, reſpecting the time in which he is generally thought to have ſtruck out his comedy, as being long antecedent to the time of Hiero; which being admitted, it will follow that he was near the cloſe of his life, when this ſentence of manual labour was executed upon him; a kind of puniſhment ſo very unlikely to be inflicted on a man of ninety-ſix years by a prince of Hiero's magnanimity and benevolence, that if I am to take the anecdote for granted, I cannot aſſent to

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thoſe authorities that have placed him ſo high in time, for the purpoſe only of putting his title of firſt founder of comedy out of diſpute.

Upon the whole, I think it likely the Athenians wrote comedy as ſoon as the Sicilians, but that Epicharmus was the firſt who formed his drama upon the poems of Homer: It is alſo clear, that his countryman and contemporary Phormis wrote comedy as ſoon, or nearly as ſoon as he did; for although Theocritus, in the epigram above cited, ſays expreſsly that Epicharmus ſtruck out comedy, yet it muſt be remarked that Theocritus was a Syracuſan by birth, living in the time of Ptolemy Lagus; and in giving this teſtimony for his fellow-citizen, it is more than probable he ſpoke locally of the *Sicilian* comedy only, as Suidas did in after times, when he ſaid that Epicharmus and Phormis firſt ſtruck out comedy *in Sicily*.

I would therefore fix Epicharmus's firſt comedy antecedent to Olymp. LXXV. at the loweſt date, becauſe we have it from good authority that he was teaching ſcholars at Syracuſe four years before the Perſian æra;

æra; and this date is confirmed by the age of Phormis, who certainly flouriſhed in the time of Gelon, and was in great favour in the court of that prince, who was predeceſſor to Hiero, and was ſucceeded by him in Olymp. LXXVII.

No. CXXXVI.

EPICHARMUS was a liberal benefactor to the ſtage. Porphyry ſays that Apollodorus the grammarian made a collection of his plays in ten volumes; Suidas reckons fifty-two; Lycon only thirty-five; but modern philologiſts have given the titles of forty, with the authorities by which they are aſcertained.

It is not my purpoſe in theſe papers to make a practice of loading the page with liſts of titles, which may too truly be called dead names; but in the inſtance of an author like Epicharmus, who ſtands at the head of his department, every relique ſeems an object of ſome curioſity; and therefore, although the following catalogue may ſtrike the

the dramatic reader as what may properly enough be called *a beggarly account of empty boxes*, yet I ſhall proceed to enumerate the titles of forty comedies, all of which are, upon good grounds of criticiſm, aſcribed to this celebrated author.

TITLES OF THE COMEDIES OF EPICHARMUS.

The Huſbandman. The Halcyon. Amycus, Son of Neptune. The Banditti. Atalanta. The Bacchæ. Buſiris. Earth and Sea. The Fathers of the People. The Bacchanalians. Diphilus. Hope. The Feſtival. The Celebration of the Victory. Hebe's Wedding. Juno's Nuptials. Vulcan, or The Revels. The Ambaſſadors to the Oracle. The Cyclops. The Reaſoner. The Megarenſian. The Muſes. The Iſlands. Niobe's Wedding. Ulyſſes the Deſerter. Ulyſſes Shipwreckt. The Chitterlings. The Pædagogues. The Paragon. The Perſians. The Stateſman. Prometheus, the Fire-ſtealer. Pyrrha, the Wife of Deucalion. The Sirens. The Iſle of Scyros. The Sphynx. The Trojans. Philoctetes. The Chorus Troop. The Potters.

The

The ſame reſpect, which led me to inſert theſe titles, led me alſo to ſearch with all poſſible diligence for every fragment which I could find of Epicharmus. I wiſh they had been more in number, and of greater importance than they are; but ſuch as they are, I have reaſon to believe they are the whole amount of what can be picked up from the wreck of this once valuable poet. The reader muſt not expect, that either in this author's inſtance, or that of any other Greek comedian, except in very few caſes, that the particular play can be aſcertained, to which the fragments belong; for the grammarians and others, who quote them, only give the name of the author, and not that of the comedy from which they extract them. I muſt in this place once for all give vent to an anxiety, which preſſes on my mind reſpecting theſe fragments of the Greek comedy, whether the inſertion of them will or will not be approved of by the generality of my readers: My ſole object is to furniſh them with rational and moral amuſement, and if I fail of that object in theſe my hearty endeavours, I have taken a great deal of pains to render theſe paſſages into Engliſh

gliſh in the beſt manner my capacity enabled me to do, to a very unfortunate purpoſe indeed. The learned reader will bear me witneſs, that theſe fragments have been the admiration of ages; and I am ſenſible that very many of them poſſeſs intrinſic beauty both of ſtile and ſentiment; and if my tranſlations have not robbed them of their original merit, ſome pleaſure, and let me hope ſome profit, may attend their peruſal. I have ſtudied ſo to claſs them, as not to burthen or diſtract the reader with a mere ſucceſſion of miſcellaneous quotations without any reference or connection, which I am ſenſible could not be an agreeable mode of publication, though Stobæus, Hertelius and ſome others have taken it up; but on the contrary, I have endeavoured to introduce them with ſome anecdote or other, which ſerves to weave them into the thread of the work. Moſt of the tranſlations will be found in metre, in which I have ſtrove to copy the free ſtile of our old metrical comic poets: Some I have turned into rhime, where the thought allowed it, and the expreſſions were terſe and epigrammatical: Others I have put into proſe; and in all I have been as cloſe

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and faithful to the original, as the language and my conſtruction of the author would permit. If the candid reader will accept this preface in apology, I ſhall give him no further trouble on the ſubject.

Epicharmus, in one of his comedies (we may ſuppoſe *The Stateſman*) introduces the following retort from ſome man of low birth to a prating old woman, who is vapouring about her anceſtry.

" Good goſſip, if you love me, prate no more:
" What are your genealogies to me?
" Away to thoſe, who have more need of them!
" Let the degenerate wretches, if they can,
" Dig up dead honour from their father's tombs,
" And boaſt it for their own—Vain, empty boaſt!
" When every common fellow, that they meet,
" If accident hath not cut off the ſcroll,
" Can ſhew a liſt of anceſtry as long.
" You call the Scythians barbarous, and deſpiſe them;
" Yet Anacharſis was a Scythian born;
" And every man of a like noble nature,
" Tho' he were moulded from an Æthiop's loins,
" Is nobler than your pedigrees can make him."

The following is a falſe antitheſis, in which bodily ſtrength is ſubſtituted for mental—

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" It demands the ſtrength of a lion to " ſubdue the weakneſs of love."

MORAL MAXIMS.

" Be ſober in thought! be ſlow in belief! " Theſe are the ſinews of wiſdom."

" It is the part of a wiſe man to foreſee " what ought to be done, ſo ſhall he not " repent of what is done."

" Throw not away thine anger upon " trifles! Reaſon, and not rage, ſhould " govern."

" Mankind are more indebted to induſtry " than to ingenuity: The gods ſet up their " favours at a price, and induſtry is the pur- " chaſer."

" A man without merit, ſhall live with- " out envy; but who would wiſh to eſcape " on theſe terms?"

" Live ſo as to hold yourſelf prepared " either for a long life, or for a ſhort one!"

There is no ſubject, which the comic poets whet their wits upon more frequently than marriage. The wives of Syracuſe were not much obliged to Epicharmus for the following ſally.

" Marriage

" Marriage is like a caſt of the dice: If " you get a wife of good morals and a quiet " temper withal, happy is your lot: If you " light upon a gadding, goſſipping, extra- " vagant huſſy, it is not a wife you wed, but " an eternal plague in the apparel of a wo- " man. There is not in the habitable globe " ſo dire a torment; I feel it to my ſorrow; " the better luck is his, who has never " tried it."

Mr. Congreve, in his *Double Dealer*, has the following paſſage between Mellafont and Cynthia upon the very eve of their nuptials.

Cynth. *Then I find marriage is like cards; if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.*

Mell. *No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: Fortune indeed makes the match, and the two neareſt, and ſometimes the two fartheſt are together; but the game depends entirely upon judgment.*

Cynth. *Still it is a game, and conſequently one of us muſt be a loſer.*

Mell. *Not at all; only a friendly trial of ſkill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.*

Neither this, nor any part of the ſcene to which it appertains, is in Mr. Congreve's beſt manner. The wit does not flow, but

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is pumped up with labour, and not very clean when it comes.

Of *Phormis*, the contemporary of Epicharmus, no fragments are to be found.

Chionides of Athens wrote comedy before the Perſian æra, and is the oldeſt writer of the Athenian ſtage. All the memorials I can obtain of him are, that he wrote three plays, intitled, *The Heroes*, *The Lyars*, and *The Poor Men*.

Magnes was an Athenian, and began to appear as a writer of Comedy, whilſt Chionides was living: Ariſtophanes makes mention of him in his play of *The Knights*. The Scholiaſt in his comment on the paſſage obſerves, that all his works are periſhed, nothing remaining but the titles of nine comedies, of which two bear the ſame names with two of Ariſtophanes, viz. *The Frogs*, and *The Birds*; the ſame Scholiaſt informs us that Magnes bore away two prizes.

Dinolochus was contemporary with Magnes: He uſed the Doric dialect, and is ſaid to have produced fourteen plays. Some place his birth at Syracuſe, others at Agrigentum. Suidas ſays he flouriſhed ſo early as Olymp. LXXIII. but this ill agrees with the

the circumſtance of his being the ſon, or, as others contend, the ſcholar of Epicharmus. His works have totally periſhed.

Theſe five poets, three of whom were Sicilians, muſt be called The Fathers of Comedy, and all that now remains of them is compriſed in the few ſhort paſſages here inſerted.

Whilſt their comedies were in repreſentation, tragedy was advancing under Pratinas and Chærilus, and Æſchylus had already taken poſſeſſion of the ſtage: Sophocles and Euripides, were born, the former ſix years before the latter: *Ion*, ſurnamed Xuthis, ſon of Orthomenes of Chios, began to write tragedy in the firſt year of Olymp. LXXXII. Æſchylus being then dead. *Theognis*, (from the coldneſs of his drama nicknamed *Snow*) was contemporary with Ion.

The magiſtracy of Athens in Olymp. LXXXV. when Myrrichides was archon, publiſhed a decree, prohibiting the repreſentation of comedies in Athens: This decree held in force only two years under Glaucides and Theopompus; for when Euthymenes ſucceeded to that annual dignity, he found it expedient to gratify the people

people by a revocation of the edict, and the comic muſe was reinſtated on the ſtage by the celebrated triumvirate of Eupolis, Cratinus and Ariſtophanes; Cratinus opening the theatre with his celebrated comedy of *The Winter Amuſements*, Eupolis with *The New Moons*, and Ariſtophanes with *The Acharnenſians*.

No. CXXXVII.

CRATINUS, *Eupolis* and *Ariſtophanes* are generally claſſed together as rivals and principals in what is called *The Old Comedy*. Cratinus was ſenior in age to both his competitors, and Eupolis is charged by the old annotator upon Ariſtophanes of having copied from him very freely: I confeſs this is ſtubborn authority, and yet it ſeems hard to believe that Eupolis, who was ſo conſtantly engaged in competition with his rival, ſhould expoſe himſelf to certain detection of ſo diſgraceful a ſort; and had it been ſo, I ſhould rather have expected to meet with the charge in the text of Ariſtophanes, than in

in the comment: I muſt add, that upon the cloſeſt ſearch I can find nothing that favours this imputation in any other author which ſpeaks of Eupolis, but many circumſtances on the contrary, which ſeem to place his pretenſions to originality on as good ground as that of his contemporaries, with whom he is equally celebrated.

Theſe poets were in high favour with the people on account of the boldneſs and perſonality of their ſatire, and for the ſame reaſon proportionably obnoxious to the nobles and magiſtrates, whom they laſhed without mercy. Ariſtophanes was much the leaſt bitter of the three, and yet we have ſome ſmart ſpecimens of his ſeverity. Perſius ſeems to make this diſtinction in the following paſſage—

Audaci quicunque afflate Cratino,
Iratum Eupolidem prægrandi cum ſene palles,
Aſpice et hæc.

In theſe lines he characterizes Cratinus and Eupolis by the epithets of *audax* and *iratus*, whereas he introduces Ariſtophanes under the deſcription only of *prægrandis ſenex*, which

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is interpreted to refer to the ſuperior gravity and dignity of his ſtile.

Horace, in the fourth ſatire of his firſt book, inſtances theſe three poets by pre-eminence from amongſt all the writers of the old comedy.

Eupolis atque Cratinus Ariſtophaneſque poetæ,
Atque alii, quorum comœdia priſca virorum eſt,
Si quis erat dignus deſcribi, quod malus ac fur,
Quod mœchus foret, aut ſicarius, aut alioqui
Famoſus, multa cum libertate notabant.

The comic poets, in its earlieſt age,
Who form'd the manners of the Grecian ſtage,
Was there a villain, who might juſtly claim
A better right of being damn'd to fame,
Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
They freely ſtigmatiz'd the wretch in rhime.

(FRANCIS.)

It appears by this quotation, that Horace does not conſider their comedy in the ſame light with Ariſtotle, as if they repreſented human nature in worſe colours than it deſerved.

Quintilian expreſsly ſays, that theſe are the chief writers of the old comedy—*Plures ejus auctores; Ariſtophanes tamen et Eupolis, Cratinuſque præcipui*:—And he recommends

the old Greek comedy, and theſe authors in particular, as the beſt model (Homer only excepted) for his orator to form himſelf upon; inaſmuch as it is there only he will find the Attic ſtile in its purity and perfection; and though the old comedy, as he obſerves, is chiefly occupied in wit and ſarcaſm for the purpoſe of chaſtiſing vice, yet it has many excellences of a more general ſort: It is energetic, elegant, and full of graces; ſo that if Homer alone (who like his own Achilles has the privilege of being always put above compariſon) be excepted, no other ſchool for oratory can come in competition with this.

CRATINUS.

Cratinus was the ſon of Callimedes an Athenian; we have the titles of at leaſt thirty comedies of his writing, ſo that Suidas is miſtaken in aſcribing to him only twenty-one; he was a poet of ſtrong imagination, and a florid lively ſtile; he carried away no leſs than nine prizes, which is a large proportion of ſucceſs, compared with others, who rank amongſt the higheſt both in the comic and tragic line. A ſecond edict came

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out in his time for reſtraining the licentiouſneſs of the ſtage in point of perſonality, and Cratinus, in common with the reſt of his contemporaries, found himſelf obliged to divert his ſatire from the living to the dead: Sarcaſms were now levelled at men's productions, not at their perſons; the tragic authors felt the chief weight of the attack, though even Homer did not eſcape, as may be gathered from *The Ulyſſes* of Cratinus, in which he parodies and ridicules the Odyſſey.

Cratinus lived to an extreme old age, though according to the looſe morals of the Greeks he indulged his paſſions both natural and unnatural without reſtraint: He carried his love of wine to ſuch exceſs, that he got the name of Φιλοπότης, launching out in praiſe of drinking, and rallying all ſobriety out of countenance, aſſerting that no author can be good for any thing, who does not love his bottle, and that dramatic poets in particular ought to drink hard, as a duty due to Bacchus for his peculiar patronage and protection of the ſtage. Horace, who was not very averſe from his doctrine, quotes his authority in the firſt lines of an epiſtle to Mecænas.

Priſco ſi credis, Mecænas docte, Cratino,
Nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina poſſunt,
Quæ ſcribuntur aquæ potoribus.

O learn'd Mecænas, hear Cratinus ſpeak,
And take this maxim from the gay old Greek;
No verſe ſhall pleaſe, or laſting honours gain,
Which coldly flows from water-drinker's brain.

As for the love of wine, it ſeems to have ſtood in the place of a merit with the Greeks; but Cratinus's exceſs was attended in his old age with ſome marks of weakneſs and want of retention, incidental to an exhauſted conſtitution, which gave a handle to Ariſtophanes, who was a younger man (and not much more abſtemious) to bring his old competitor on the ſtage, and hold him up to ridicule for this infirmity. The charge was unmanly, and rouſed the aged veteran to return the attack: Cratinus, then nearly approaching to an hundred, had left off writing, but he was not yet ſuperannuated, and lived to compleat a comedy, which he appoſitely entitled *The Flaggon*. In the plot of this piece he feigns himſelf married to Comedy, whom he perſonifies, and repreſents the lady in diſguſt with her huſband for his unconjugal neglect, on which account ſhe ſtates her charge, and roundly ſues for

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an actual divorce: Upon this hearing, certain friends and advocates are introduced on the ſcene in behalf of the party accuſed, who make ſuit to the dame to ſtay her proceedings, and not be over haſty in throwing off an old ſpouſe; but on the contrary recommend to her to enter calmly into an amicable diſcuſſion of her grievances: To this propoſal ſhe at length accedes, and this gives occaſion to take up the charge of Ariſtophanes, accuſing the old bard of drunkenneſs and the concomitant circumſtances, which had been publiſhed with ſo much ill-nature to make him ridiculous at the end of life. Then follows a very pleaſant refutation of all theſe libels, by which he contrives to turn the laugh againſt Ariſtophanes, and ſo concludes the comedy. One feels a ſatisfaction even at this diſtance of ages to know, that the old poet bore away the prize with this very comedy, and ſoon after expired in the arms of victory at the age of ninety-ſeven, in the firſt year of Olymp. LXXXIX.

The Athenians gave him a monument, and an epitaph, in which they omit all mention of his fine talents, and record nothing but his drunkenneſs. He ſpared no

man when living, and even death itſelf could not protect him from retaliation.

" Θανόντος ἀνδρὸς πᾶς' ἀπόλλυται χάρις."
(STESICHORUS.)

The evil that he did liv'd after him,
The good was all interred with his bones.
(SHAKESPEAR.)

There is ſcarce a fragment of this poet, once ſo great a favourite, that is now to be found; the very few ſcraps of ſentences remaining are too imperfect to merit a tranſlation: One little ſpark of his genius however will be ſeen in the following epigrammatic turn of thought upon the loſs of a ſtatue, which being the workmanſhip of Dædalus, he ſuppoſes to have made uſe of its privilege, and eſcaped from its pedeſtal.

" My ſtatue's gone! By Dædalus 'twas made.
" It is not ſtolen therefore; it has ſtray'd."

EUPOLIS.

Eupolis became a very popular author ſome years before the death of Cratinus: The bold ſtrong ſpirit of his ſatire recommended

mended him to the public more than the beauties and graces of his ſtile, which he was not ſtudious to poliſh. He attacked the moſt obnoxious and profligate characters in Athens, without any regard to his perſonal ſafety; to expoſe the cheat, and ridicule the impoſtor was the glory of his muſe, and neither the terrors of the magiſtracy, nor the myſteries of ſuperſtition could divert him from it. He wrote two comedies profeſſedly againſt Autolycus the Areopagite, whoſe miſbehaviour in the Chæronenſian war had made him infamous, and he called them after his name *The firſt and ſecond Autolycus*. In his famous comedy called *The Baptæ* he inveighs againſt the effeminate turpitude of his countrymen, whom he exhibits dancing after the manner of the laſcivious prieſts of Cotytto (viz. *The Baptæ*) in the habits and faſhion of female minſtrels.

Talia ſecretâ coluerunt orgia tedâ
Cecropiam ſoliti Baptæ laſſare Cotytto.

(JUVEN.)

The prevailing account of his death is, that the perſons, whom he had ſatirized in

this play of the *Baptæ*, ſuborned certain aſſaſſins to throw him into the ſea, as he was paſſing the Helleſpont with the Athenian forces then on an expedition againſt the Lacedæmonians; and ſeveral authorities impute this revengeful deed to Alcibiades, who had been ſeverely handled in that piece; but Cicero in his firſt epiſtle of the ſixth book to Atticus ſpeaks of this report as a vulgar error, and quotes Eratoſthenes for the fact of Eupolis having written certain comedies after the time, when the event of his death is dated—*redarguit Eratoſthenes; affert enim quas ille poſt id tempus fabulas docuerit.*

Pauſanias tells us, that his tomb was erected upon the banks of the Æſopus in Sicyonia, and as it is not likely this honour ſhould be paid to his memory by the Sicyonians, he being an Athenian born, unleſs he had died in their country; the authority of Pauſanias ſeems to confirm the account of Eratoſthenes, and diſcredit the fable of his being thrown into the Helleſpont.

In his comedy called *The People*, by the fiction of the ſcene he raiſes the ſhades of

their

their departed orators and dæmagogues from the dead; and when Pericles, laſt of the troop, ariſes, the poet demands, "Who "it is that appears?" The queſtion being anſwered, and the ſpirit of Pericles diſmiſſed, he pronounces his encomium—"That he was pre-eminent as an orator, "for man never ſpoke as he ſpoke: When "he ſtarted like a courſer in the race, he "threw all competitors out of ſight, ſo "rapid was the torrent of his eloquence; "but with that rapidity there flowed ſuch "ſweetneſs and perſuaſion from his lips, "that He alone of all orators ſtruck a ſting "into the very ſouls of his hearers, and left it "there to remain for ever."

I think it probable the following fragment has been the opening ſpeech of this very comedy; for in it he addreſſes *the People*, and complains of the preference they are apt to beſtow upon foreigners, to the neglect of their own countrymen—"Re-"ceiving every thing with favour that falls "from their lips, and applauding them as "oracles of human wiſdom; whereas, if any "one of your own countrymen addreſſes you

" (though in no reſpect their inferior) you
" look down upon him with contempt; nay,
" you are ready to pronounce that the man
" is in his dotage; a fool who never had
" ſenſes, or a madman who has loſt them
" —but hark ye, gentlemen! let me have
" a word with you at ſtarting; let me pre-
" vail with you to revoke theſe unjuſt pro-
" ceedings, and give a fellow-citizen and
" your humble ſervant a fair hearing and
" impartial judgment."

I ſuſpect this to be a fly blow at Ariſtophanes, who was not an Athenian born, and perhaps at this time had not his adoption. He proceeds to lament the ſtate of public affairs, and the degeneracy of the times; for in the old comedy it was uſual for the poet to harangue the theatre, either in the opening of the piece, or at any convenient interval between the ſcenes, ſometimes in his own perſon, ſometimes by the chorus. We cannot wonder if ſuch ſentiments as the following, delivered from the ſtage, ſhould render Eupolis obnoxious to men in power.

Addreſs

Addreſs to the Audience by Eupolis.

" Of many things, which offer themſelves " to my conſideration, I cannot find words " to ſpeak, ſo penetrated am I with afflic- " tion, when I turn my thoughts to the " condition of the commonwealth; for you " muſt be conſcious, O citizens, it was not " ſo adminiſtered in times paſt, when men " of high birth, men, whoſe rank, fortune " and merit gave them a conſideration in " the ſtate, filled the firſt offices of govern- " ment: To ſuch we deferred, as to the " deities themſelves; for they merited our " reſpect, and under their protection we " enjoyed ſecurity: Now we have no other " guide in our election but blind ignoble " chance, and on whatſoever head it falls, " though he be the worſt and meaneſt of " mankind, he ſtarts up a great man at " once, and is inſtalled with all proper ſo- " lemnity a rogue in ſtate."

Here the poet ſpeaks out of the roſtrum rather than from the ſtage: This is plain bold language; and tempts me to call our countryman Ben Jonſon on the ſcene, who

was deep in all these remnants of the old Greek poets, and frequently talks the very language of the Athenian theatre.

Asper, in character of *Presenter* of the play, thus opens the comedy of *Every Man out of his Humour.*

Address to the Audience by B. Jonson.

Away!
Who is so patient of this impious world,
That he can check his spirit, or rein his tongue?—
Who can behold such prodigies as these,
And have his lips seal'd up? Not I; my soul
Was never ground into such oily colours,
To flatter vice and dawb iniquity:
But with an armed and resolved hand
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,
Naked as at their birth——

I fear no mood stampt in a private brow,
When I am pleas'd to unmask a public vice.
I fear no strumpet's drugs, nor ruffian's stab,
Should I detect their hateful luxuries:
No broker's, usurer's, or lawyer's gripe,
Were I dispos'd to say, They're all corrupt.
I fear no courtier's frown, should I applaud
The easy flexure of his supple hams.
Tut! these are so innate and popular,
That drunken custom would not shame to laugh
In scorn at him, that should not dare to tax them.
&c. &c.

This

This is the very ſpirit of the old Greek comedy, ſpeaking through the organs of our Engliſh Ariſtophanes, and old Ben fills the character of the *prægrandis ſenex*, as well as he for whom it was deſigned. It is the *Comœdia, vocem tollens*, and aſſerting her determination to keep up her rights according to antient cuſtom of her founders—*Siquis erat dignus deſcribi.*—In the third year of Olymp. LXXXIX. which was two years after the deceaſe of Cratinus, Eupolis acted his comedy called *The Flatterers*, Alcæus being archon. I cannot doubt but the following is a fragment of this comedy; it is a part of the ſpeech of a paraſite, and runs over a few of the arts, by which he gulls the rich boobies that fall in his way.

The Paraſite of Eupolis.

" Mark now, and learn of me the thriving arts,
" By which we paraſites contrive to live:
" Fine rogues we are, my friend (of that be ſure)
" And daintily we gull mankind.—Obſerve!
" Firſt I provide myſelf a nimble thing
" To be my page, a varlet of all crafts;
" Next two new ſuits for feaſts and gala-days,
" Which I promote by turns, when I walk forth
" To ſun myſelf upon the public ſquare:
" There if perchance I ſpy ſome rich dull knave,

" Strait

" Strait I accoſt him, do him reverence,
" And, ſaunt'ring up and down, with idle chat
" Hold him awhile in play; at every word,
" Which his wiſe worſhip utters, I ſtop ſhort
" And bleſs myſelf for wonder; if he ventures
" On ſome vile joke, I blow it to the ſkies,
" And, hold my ſides for laughter—Then to ſupper
" With others of our brotherhood to meſs
" In ſome night-cellar on our barley cakes,
" And club inventions for the next day's ſhift."

The Paraſite of Ben Jonſon.

MOSCA.

———Oh! your paraſite
Is a moſt precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongſt clods and clot-poles here on earth.
I muſe the myſtery was not made a ſcience,
It is ſo liberally profeſt. Almoſt
All the wiſe world is little elſe in nature
But paraſites and ſub-paraſites. And yet
I mean not thoſe, that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them; have no houſe,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for men's ear's, to bait that ſenſe—nor thoſe,
With their court dog-tricks, that can fawn and fleer,
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo, My Lord, and lick away a moth;
But your fine elegant raſcal, that can riſe,
And ſtoop almoſt together like an arrow,
Shoot thro' the air as nimbly as a ſtar,
Turn ſhort as doth a ſwallow, and be here,

And

And there, and here, and yonder all at once;
Preſent to any humour, all occaſion,
And change a viſor ſwifter than a thought;
This is the creature had the art born with him.

Lucian's *Paraſite*, which is a maſter-piece of character and comic writing, and Horace's dialogue between Tireſias and Ulyſſes (which is the fifth ſatire of the ſecond book) might perhaps be traced in paſſages of this comedy of Eupolis, if we had it entire.

Eupolis in his *Lacedæmonians* attacks both the public and private character of Cimon, charging him with improper partiality for the Lacedæmonians, with drunkenneſs, and even with an inceſtuous commerce with his own ſiſter Pnyce: Plutarch takes notice of this attack, and ſays it had a great effect in ſtirring up the populace againſt this celebrated commander.

He wrote his comedy, intitled *Marica*, againſt the orator *Hyperbolus*, whom Thucydides mentions to have been baniſhed by Oſtraciſm.

We have the titles of upwards of twenty plays of this author's compoſition.

No. CXXXVIII.

ARISTOPHANES.

Ut templum Charites, quōd non labatur, haberent,
Invenêre tuum pectus, Ariſtophanes.
(JOS. SCALIGER EX PLATONE.)

THIS is an eulogy the more honourable to Ariſtophanes, as it fell from Plato, the diſciple of Socrates. If I were to collect all the teſtimonies, that are ſcattered through the works of the learned in behalf of the author we are now about to review, I ſhould fill my pages with panegyric; but this I am the leſs concerned to do, as the reader has a part of him in poſſeſſion, which as it is near a fourth of the whole man, he has more than the foot by which to meaſure this Hercules.

Both the parentage and birth-place of Ariſtophanes are doubtful: He was an adopted, not a natural, citizen of Athens, and I incline to think he was the ſon of Philippus, a native of Ægina, where our poet had ſome patrimony. He was in perſon very

very tall, bony and robuſt, and we have his own authority for his baldneſs; but whether this was as diſgraceful at Athens, as it was amongſt the Romans, I have not been anxious to enquire. He was in private life of a free, open and companionable temper, and his company was ſought after by the greateſt characters of the age with all poſſible avidity: Plato, and even Socrates, ſhared many ſocial hours with him; he was much the moſt popular character in Athens, as the great dæmagogue Cleon experienced to his coſt, not to mention Socrates himſelf: Every honour that could be paid to a poet was publicly beſtowed upon Ariſtophanes by the Athenian people; nor did they confine their rewards to honorary prizes only, but decreed him fines and pecuniary confiſcations from thoſe, who ventured to attack him with ſuits and proſecutions: Dionyſius of Syracuſe in vain made overtures to him of the moſt flattering ſort, at the time when Æſchines and Ariſtippus, Socratic philoſophers, were retained in his court with ſo much infamy to their private characters, and when even Plato himſelf had ſolicited his notice by three ſeveral viſits to Syracuſe, where

where he had not the good fortune to render himſelf very agreeable. The fame of Ariſtophanes had reached to the court of Perſia, and his praiſes were there ſounded by the great king himſelf, who conſidered him not only as the firſt poet, but as the moſt conſpicuous perſonage at Athens. I do not find him marked with any other immorality, than that of intemperance with regard to wine, the faſhionable exceſs of the time, and in ſome degree a kind of prerogative of his profeſſion, a *licentia poetica:* Athenæus the Deipnoſophiſt ſays he was drunk when he compoſed, but this is a charge that will not paſs upon any man who is ſober; and if we rejected it from Sophocles in the caſe of Æſchylus, we ſhall not receive it but with contempt from ſuch an accuſer as Athenæus. He was not happy in his domeſtic connections, for he naturally declares that *he was aſhamed of his wife*—Τὴν γυναῖκα δ' αἰσχύνομαι —and as for his two ſons, Philippus and Ararotes, they did him as little credit, and he conſidered them accordingly. He was bleſt with a good conſtitution, and lived to turn above ſeventy years, though the date of his death is not preciſely laid down.

Though

Though he was reſolute in oppoſing himſelf to the torrent of vice and corruption, which overſpread the manners of his country, yet he was far more temperate in his perſonal invective than his contemporaries. He was too ſenſitive in his nature to undertake the performance of his own parts in perſon, which was general with all the comic poets of his time; and he ſtood their raillery for not venturing to tread the ſtage as they did. Amipſias and Ariſtonymus, both rival authors, charged him with availing himſelf of the talents of other people from conſciouſneſs of his own inſufficiency: Their raillery could not draw him out, till his favourite actor Calliſtratus declined undertaking the part of Cleon in his perſonal comedy of *The Knights*, dreading the reſentment of that powerful dæmagogue, who was as unforgiving as he was imperious: In this dilemma Ariſtophanes conquered his repugnance, and determined upon preſenting himſelf on the ſtage for the firſt time in his life: He dreſſed himſelf in the character of this formidable tribune; and having coloured his face with vermilion up to the hue of the brutal perſon he was to reſemble,

ſemble, he entered on the part in ſuch a ſtile of energy, and with ſuch natural expreſſion, that the effect was irreſiſtible; and the proud factious Cleon was ſtript of his popularity, and ſentenced in a fine of five talents by the knight's decree, as damages for the charge he had preferred againſt the author touching his right of citizenſhip, which was awarded and ſecured to him by the ſame inſtrument.

Such was Ariſtophanes in perſon, manners and character: As a poet I might refer the learned reader to his works, which ſpeak ſo ably for themſelves: They are not only valuable as his remains, but when we conſider them as the only remains, which give us any complete ſpecimens of the Greek comedy, they become ineſtimable through the misfortunes of all the reſt. We receive them as treaſures thrown up from a wreck, or more properly as one paſſenger eſcaped out of a fleet, whoſe narrative we liſten to with the more eagerneſs and curioſity, becauſe it is from this alone we can gain intelligence of the nature of the expedition, the quality of the armament, and the characters and talents

of

of the commanders, who have periſhed and gone down into the abyſs together.

The comedies of Ariſtophanes are univerſally eſteemed to be the ſtandard of Attic writing in its greateſt purity; if any man would wiſh to know the language as it was ſpoken by Pericles, he muſt ſeek it in the ſcenes of Ariſtophanes, where he is not uſing a foreign or affected diction, for the purpoſe of accommodating it to ſome particular or extravagant character. The antient authors, both Greek and Roman, who had all the productions of the Athenian ſtage before them, ſpeak of him with ſuch rapture and admiration, as to give him a decided preference before all other comic poets, with an exception as I believe of Plutarch only, who brings him into compariſon with Menander, and after diſcuſſing their different pretenſions decides peremptorily for Menander: This criticiſm of Plutarch's I ſhall reſerve for future conſideration; and when I ſaid that he is ſingle in his preference of Menander, perhaps I ought to recal the expreſſion, as that poet has his admirers, but none that I know of, who have deliberately given judgment in his favour upon a critical com-

pariſon

pariſon with Ariſtophanes, except Plutarch above mentioned.

The drama of Ariſtophanes is of a mixed ſpecies; ſometimes perſonal, at other times inclining to parody, according to the character of the middle comedy: He varies and accommodates his ſtile to his ſubject and the ſpeakers on the ſcene; on ſome occaſions it is elevated, grave, ſublime and poliſhed to a wonderful degree of brilliancy and beauty; on others it ſinks and deſcends into humble dialogue, provincial ruſticity, coarſe naked obſcenity, and even puns and quibbles: The verſatility of his genius is admirable; for he gives us every rank and deſcription of men in his ſcenes, and in every one is ſtrictly characteriſtic. In ſome paſſages, and frequently in his choruſſes, he ſtarts out of the ordinary province of comedy into the loftieſt flights of poetry, and in theſe I doubt if Æſchylus or Pindar have ſurpaſſed him: In ſentiment and good ſenſe he is not inferior to Euripides, and in the acuteneſs of his criticiſms equalled by none: In the general purport of his moral he ſeldom, if ever, fails; but he works occaſionally with unclean tools, and, like Juvenal in

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the lower ages, chaſtiſes vice by an open expoſure of its turpitude, offending the ear, whilſt he aims to mend the heart. This habit of plain ſpeaking was the faſhion of the times he wrote in, and the audience demanded and would have it; that he may be ſtudied by the pureſt readers we ſhould conclude, when we are told he was the pillow companion of a Chriſtian ſaint, as the well-known anecdote of Chryſoſtom will teſtify. If we cannot entirely defend the indelicacy of his muſe, we cannot deny but that a great ſhare of the blame reſts with the ſpectators: A dramatic poet cannot model his audience, but in a certain degree muſt of neceſſity conform to their taſte and humour: It can be proved that Ariſtophanes himſelf laments the hard taſk impoſed upon him of gratifying the public at the expence of decency; but with the example of the poet Cratinus before his eyes, who was driven from the ſtage becauſe he ſcrupled to amuſe the public ear with tawdry jeſts, it is not to be wondered at, if an author, emulous of applauſe, ſhould fall in with the wiſhes of the theatre, unbecoming as they were: Let me add in further palliation of this fault, that he never

puts obſcenity but in the mouths of obſcene characters, and ſo applies it as to give his hearers a diſguſt for ſuch unſeemly habits. Morality I confeſs deſerves a purer vehicle, yet I contend that his purpoſe was honeſt, and I dare believe went farther towards reforming the looſe Athenians, than all the indeciſive poſitions of the philoſophers, who being enliſted into ſects and factions ſcarce agreed in any one point of common morality.

This part of his defence would have been very eaſily handled a century or two ago; Ben Jonſon for inſtance could have helped his argument out with his own example, if occaſion had required; but the taſk falls very heavy upon an advocate in this age, which is of purer ears than to liſten to obſcenity; and though my particular difficulties have thereby been increaſed, I ſhall never repine under the weight of any burthen, which the merit of my contemporaries lays upon me.

His wit is of various kinds; much is of a general and permanent ſtamp; much is local, perſonal and untransferable to poſterity: No author ſtill retains ſo many brilliant

liant paſſages, yet none has ſuffered ſuch injury by the depredations of time: Of his powers in ridicule and humour, whether of character or dialogue, there might be no end to inſtances: If Plautus gives us the model of Epicharmus, he does not equal him; and if Terence tranſlates Menander, his original does not approach him in theſe particulars: I doubt if the ſum total of wit and humour in all their ſtage-lacqueys would together balance the ſingle character of *Cario* in the *Plutus*. His ſatire, whether levelled againſt the vices and follies of the people at large, againſt the corruption of the dæmagogues, the turpitude and chicanery of the philoſophers, or the arrogant ſelf-ſufficiency of the tragic poets, cuts with an edge that penetrates the character, and leaves no ſhelter for either ignorance or criminality.

Ariſtophanes was author of above ſixty comedies, though they are erroneouſly ſtated under that amount. *The Plutus* now in our hands (which is the ſecond he wrote of that title) has been twice publiſhed in our language by two different tranſlators; one of theſe I have ſeen, which was jointly executed by the celebrated Henry Fielding

and the Rev. Mr. Young: There is an Engliſh tranſlation, as I am told, of *The Clouds*, but this has never been in my hands, and alſo a very late one of *The Frogs* in metre, which I have peruſed. Much praiſe is due to the labours of learned men, who thus endeavour to make his wit current amongſt us; and every man who knows the difficulties of their taſk, will find his candour ſtrongly called upon to excuſe any errors or inequalities, that may appear in their performances.

No. CXXXIX.

I SAID in my former Paper that Plutarch had made a compariſon between Ariſtophanes and Menander, and given his decided judgment for the latter. It might well be expected, that a Greek of the lower ages, living in the time of Trajan, and in court-favour with that emperor, ſhould prefer a poliſhed elegant author like Menander to one ſo bold, perſonal and ſarcaſtic as the poet he compares with him. Horace even

in

in the time of Auguſtus had begun to decry the *Plautinos Sales*, and the manners were much more refined in Plutarch's time than in his. As we can take little eſtimate of Menander from the fragments only of his comedies which now remain, we cannot ſee what general reaſons Plutarch, or any other critic of his time, might have for preferring him; but as far as he has entered into ſtrictures and objections in his examination of Ariſtophanes, ſo far we can follow him; this part at leaſt of his criticiſm is ſtill open to be controverted, and if it ſhall appear that he has condemned one party without reaſon, it may be preſumed he has preferred the other without juſtice.

Plutarch aſſerts that Ariſtophanes is a punſter, a quibbler upon words, and ridiculouſly given to parody. It is unfortunate for this charge that he follows it up with quotations, in every one of which Ariſtophanes is not only to be defended but applauded; he could not have ſelected paſſages leſs to the purpoſe; and the accuſation has accordingly been turned againſt

him by Friſchlinus and other advocates of the poet.

He arraigns the ſtile of Ariſtophanes on account of its inequalities and variations, obſerving that it is ſometimes high and ſometimes low, now turgid and inflated, now grovelling and depreſſed—as if he had not been aware that the great variety of characters, which his comedy exhibits, naturally demands as great a variety of ſtile: He applauds Menander for the uniform and equal tenor of his ſtile, not ſeeming to recollect that his comedy on the contrary had one uniform complexion, contained no choruſſes and introduced no living characters; whereas Ariſtophanes, according to the ſpirit of the old comedy, makes uſe of choruſſes, many of which are of ſo fanciful and imaginary a nature, that it is neceſſary to employ all the powers of poetry in their diſplay, and in ſome caſes even to create a new ſtile (and almoſt language) for the occaſion: He alſo introduces gods, heroes, poets, orators, philoſophers, ambaſſadors, prieſts on his ſcene; ſome of theſe profeſſedly demand a ſwelling tragic pomp of words, for inſtance Æſchylus, Sophocles and

and Euripides: In ſhort, the very excellence of Ariſtophanes is diſcrimination of ſtile and character. Should Socrates and a ſlave ſpeak in the ſame phraſe? Should Lamachus (a mere *miles glorioſus*) talk in the tone of a beggarly Megarenſian pedlar? Certainly not; nor is there any need to dwell longer on this criticiſm of Plutarch's, in which the ingenious author has ſhewn little of his uſual candour or judgment. That he ſhould be prepoſſeſſed in favour of the new comedy is very natural; elegant and moral fictions are both more pleaſing and more proper ſubjects for the drama, than bold and coarſe truths and living realities: The even ſuavity of Menander's ſtile might be more to his taſte than the irregular ſublimity of Ariſtophanes's; but when I ſee him manage the argument in a manner ſo much below his uſual ſagacity, I cannot help ſuſpecting there might be ſome other beſides general prejudice in his mind againſt Ariſtophanes, and I make no doubt he had foſtered ſtrong reſentments againſt him for his attacks upon Socrates; I alſo ſee ſome grounds for believing that he had been oppoſed by Pliny in his par-

tiality for Menander, whom that author calls *omnis luxuriæ interpres*; a charge which was reſented by Plutarch, who nevertheleſs was compelled to admit it: It is not improbable therefore that this might have given ſome occaſion to him for entering into a more formal compariſon between the two authors, and for publiſhing his ſtrictures upon Ariſtophanes. Upon looking over the titles of the comedies of the laſt-named author, which are loſt, I find one intitled *Bœotia*, which play was tranſlated and brought upon the Roman ſtage by Plautus, as it is generally thought, though we are told that M. Varro gave it to one Aquilius; be this as it may, the comedy was produced by one or the other, and there is a fragment of it in proof, which will be found in Pareus's edition of Plautus: Here is freſh reaſon for Plutarch (who was a Bœotian) to take up a reſentment againſt Ariſtophanes; and, if it were a ſubject worth following, I could ſhew that Plutarch's national prejudices were uncommonly ſtrong: The comedy indeed is not in exiſtence, both original and tranſlation being periſhed; but we can eaſily believe

lieve that Bœotia did not eſcape out of Ariſtophanes's hands without a pretty ſmart flagellation; and this was the more galling to Plutarch, becauſe it was naturalized on the Roman ſtage, and, if it was ſtill in repreſentation, might give a handle to the wits of the time for a run upon his native country. But I perceive my zeal is carrying me into an unprofitable reſearch, and I proceed with my ſubject.

Ariſtophanes has ſometimes been reproached for his attacks upon Euripides; but this author was a fair ſubject for ſatire in his literary character, and, though he was the friend of Socrates, his private morals were no leſs open to reproof. The voice of the heathen world has been ſo loud in the praiſe of Socrates; he is ſo decidedly the hero of all the Ciceros and declaimers upon morality, that even now, after ſo many centuries of Chriſtianity, it is with a kind of ſuperſtitious reverence we approach his character. His contemporaries, who ſaw him in the neareſt light, treat him with the leaſt reſpect: Ariſtophanes (as Ben Jonſon expreſſes it) *hoiſted him up with a pulley, and made him play the philoſopher in a baſket*;

meaſure how many foot a flea could ſkip geometrically by a juſt ſcale, and edify the people from the engine.—Time and prejudice have ſince caſt a veil before him, that it would be a hardy deed to attempt to withdraw.

This attack of Ariſtophanes has doomed him to almoſt univerſal deteſtation; the praiſe we give him is no more than his ſuperior genius extorts, and it is paid grudgingly, like a tax, without cordiality or good-will: We admire him for his bold attacks upon Cleon, and we can find ſome palliation for his ſtrictures upon Euripides; the languid affectation of the poet, and the turbulent ferocity of the dæmagogue, juſtify the ſatiriſt; but when he aſſaults the ſacred character of Socrates, when he arraigns the unſpotted purity of the great maſter of morality, it is no longer ſatire, it is ſacrilege. But is all this to paſs without one word for the poet? Was he given up by his contemporaries for this atrocious act? was he given up by the friends and diſciples of Socrates? By none; not even by Plato himſelf, who on the contrary careſſed, admired and extolled him both in verſe and proſe; he adopted his ſentiments on the ſubject of

Love,

Love, and engrafted them into his own *Sympoſium*: He applauded him to Dionyſius of Syracuſe, and put his comedies into his hands as the only pure and perfect model of Attic elegance: The tyrant read them, admired them, and even rehearſed them by heart; nay he did more, he turned poet himſelf, and wrote a play for the Athenian ſtage, which of courſe was honoured with a prize. And now why ſhould we be more angry than Plato was? What have we diſcovered, which he did not know, that we ſhould take the matter up ſo high? We have diſcovered that Ariſtophanes took a bribe of Melitus and his faction to attack Socrates, and pave the way for their criminal charge, by which he ſuffered; and this we take upon credit from Ælian's inſinuations in an article of his *Various Hiſtory*, which for its authority in this caſe is about as good an evidence, as any ſtory out of the *Incredibilia* of *Palæphatus Heraclitus*. Ælian however does not hardily advance this as a fact, but hooks it in by way of queſtion—*Where is the abſurdity*, he aſks, *of ſuppoſing that the poet, who was known to be needy, had taken a bribe?*—

This is a mere inſinuation, by which he tries the credulity of his readers: If they will believe it, ſo much the better for his purpoſe; if not, he has nothing elſe to offer; he has done his beſt to blacken the character of Ariſtophanes in this caſe, as he did in that of his intemperance: He has accuſed him of writing plays when he was drunk, and now he accuſes him of taking a bribe for writing them: The man who believes the one, may take the other into the bargain; for his own part, the improbability ſtares him ſo fully in the face, that he immediately ſubjoins to his inſinuation above quoted—*That for the truth of this, it was beſt known to Ariſtophanes himſelf.*—This can never paſs with any candid reader. As for the ſucceſs of the attack, that he confeſſes was beyond all example; the comedy was applauded to the ſkies; never did any poet receive ſuch honours from the public, as Ariſtophanes for this play of *The Clouds*.

As to the charge of the bribe, I need not obſerve, that if it was not an eaſy thing for any advocate of the poet to prove the negative in Hadrian's days, when Ælian threw

it

it out, it cannot be leſs difficult now to do it, when more than two millenniums have interpoſed between the fact and our examination of it: And yet we know that Ariſtophanes, in a ſhort time after the repreſentation of his *Clouds*, brought this very Melitus, who is ſuppoſed to have ſuborned him by a bribe, before the audience, and expoſed his vicious character with the moſt unſparing ſeverity. If this is not proving a negative, it is as near it as circumſtance and preſumption can go.

But there is another part of Ælian's charge which can be more clearly diſproved than the above, and this is the aſſertion he advances, that this attack upon Socrates from the ſtage was contrived by Anytus and Melitus as a prelude to their criminal accuſation of him: This Ælian expreſsly aſſerts, adding that the faction were afraid of his popularity, and therefore ſet Ariſtophanes upon him to feel the pulſe of the people, before they ventured to bring their public charge againſt him. Here he flatly confutes himſelf; for had this been the proving attack, what experiment could anſwer more completely, when even by his own account all Athens was in raptures with the poet, and

the comedy went off with more general applauſe than any was ever known to receive? nay, more than this, Socrates himſelf, according to Ælian's own account, was preſent in the theatre, and ſtood up in view of the people all the while; yet in ſpite of his preſence, in defiance of this bold appeal, the theatre rung with plaudits, and the philoſopher only ſtood up to be a more conſpicuous mark of raillery and contempt. Why then did not the faction ſeize the opportunity and ſecond the blow? Could any thing anſwer more fully to their wiſhes? or rather, could any event turn out more beyond their expectation? From Ælian's account we are left to conclude that this was the caſe, and that this attack was literally a prelude to their charge; but this inference is alike diſingenuous with all the reſt, for we know from indubitable dates that *The Clouds* was acted at leaſt *eighteen years* before the death of Socrates: It was in the firſt year of Olymp. LXXXIX. when Iſarchus was archon, that Ariſtophanes acted his firſt comedy of *The Clouds*, which was driven off the ſtage by Alcibiades and his party: In the year immediately following,

ing, when Aminias was archon, he brought out the ſecond of that name, which is the comedy in queſtion, now in our hands: Theſe are authentic records; take the earlieſt date for the death of Socrates, and it will not fall till the firſt year of Olymp. XCV. when Laches was archon; the interval is as I ſtate it; a pretty reaſonable time for ſuch a plot to be ripening: And who now will give credit to Ælian and his *Various Hiſtory*?

Having taken ſome pains to prove what Ariſtophanes's motives were not, it now remains to ſhew what they were; but this will be the ſubject of another Paper.

No. CXL.

THE Clouds is a ſatirical and perſonal comedy, the moral of which is to ſhew how the ſophiſtry of the ſchools may be employed as an inſtrument of fraud and evaſion in matters of right and property; this is its principal object: But it touches alſo upon other points by the way, and humorouſly expoſes certain new and chimerical notions about

about the relation of children to their parents, and of the influence of *The Clouds*, as ſuperior to the ſuperintending power of Jupiter.

Of its moral therefore, ſeparately conſidered (comprehending the chief duties and relations of men, whether to the gods, to their parents, or to ſociety at large) there can be no doubt; its excellence and importance ſpeak for themſelves.

The comedy being written before the practice was reſtrained of bringing living characters on the ſtage, a ſchool is here introduced, and the greateſt philoſopher of the time is repreſented in perſon on the ſtage: This philoſopher is Socrates himſelf, and the ſchool is the ſchool of Socrates.

Socrates is made to advance the hypotheſis of *The Clouds* before mentioned; but it ſhould be conſtantly kept in remembrance, that he lays down no doctrines, as principles of fraud or injuſtice: It is not the teacher who recommends, but his diſciples who pervert his inſtructions to the evil purpoſe of defrauding and eluding their creditors: The like remark holds good in the caſe of the natural duty of children to their parents:

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The ſon in the play it is true ſtrikes and beats his father on the ſtage, and he quotes the maxims of Socrates in juſtification; but he does not quote them as poſitive rules and injunctions for an act ſo atrocious; he only ſhews that ſophiſtry may be turned to defend that, or any other thing equally violent and outrageous.

There are two lights in which Socrates is to be viewed; firſt, in his public character as a teacher; ſecondly, in his private one as a man. It is chiefly in the former of theſe that Ariſtophanes has attacked him; and (as I before obſerved) it is to expoſe the evil uſes rather than the evil nature of his doctrines, that he brings his ſchool upon the ſtage; for when the diſciple is queſtioned about the ſtudies which his maſter is employed in, he makes report of ſome frivolous and minute reſearches, which are introduced only for the purpoſe of raiſing a harmleſs laugh, and ſo far there can be no offence in this ſcene.

After all it muſt be allowed, that theſe ſeminaries of ſophiſtry, which the ſtate of Athens thought it neceſſary to put down by public edict, could not have been improper ſubjects for dramatic ridicule; for if the

ſchools

ſchools were found ſo detrimental to the morals of youth, that the archons and their council, after due deliberation, reſolved upon a general expulſion of all maſters and teachers thereunto belonging, and effectually did expel them, ſurely the poet may be acquitted, when he ſatirizes thoſe obnoxious parties, whom the laws of his country in a ſhort time after cut off from the community.

There can be little doubt but this was a public meaſure founded in wiſdom, if it were for no other reaſon, than that the Lacedæmonians never ſuffered a maſter of philoſophy to open ſchool within their realm and juriſdiction, holding them in abhorrence, and proſcribing their academies as ſeminaries of evil manners, and tending to the corruption of youth: It is well known what peculiar care and attention were beſtowed upon the education of the Spartan youth, and how much more moral this people was, who admitted no philoſophers to ſettle amongſt them, than their Athenian neighbours, in whoſe diſſolute capital they ſwarmed. In fact, the enormity became too great to be redreſſed; the whole community was

infected

infected with the enthuſiaſm of theſe ſectaries; and the liberties of Athens, which depended on the public virtue of her citizens, fell a ſacrifice to the corruptions of falſe philoſophy: The wiſer Lacedæmonians ſaw the fatal error of their rivals, and availed themſelves of its conſequences; they roſe upon the ruins of Athens, and it was the triumph of wiſdom over wit: Theſe philoſophers were ingenious men, but execrable citizens; and when the raillery of the ſtage was turned againſt them, the weapons of ridicule could not be more laudably employed.

As for the ſchool of Socrates in particular, though it may be a faſhion to extol it, there is no reaſon to believe it was in better credit than any other; on the contrary, it was in ſuch public diſrepute on account of the infamous characters of many of his diſciples, and of the diſgraceful attachments he was known to have, that it was at one time deſerted by every body except Æſchines, the paraſite of the tyrant Dionyſius, and the moſt worthleſs man living: This Æſchines, his ſole and favourite diſciple, was arraigned by the pleader Lyſias, and convicted of the vileſt frauds,

frauds, and branded as a public cheat: He was a wretch, who employed the ſophiſtry and cunning argumentation, which he learnt of his maſter, to the purpoſe only of evading his debts, contracted by the moſt profligate extravagancies: He afterwards went over to the ſchool of Plato, and when Socrates was dead, had influence enough with Xantippe to obtain of her ſome dialogues from her huſband's papers, which he publiſhed as his own, and ſet up for an author and preceptor in philoſophy. It is very probable Ariſtophanes had in view the character of this very Æſchines, when he brings his old man on the ſcene, conſulting Socrates for ſophiſtical evaſions how to elude his creditors.

Another of the ſcholars of Socrates was *Simon* the ſophiſt, a man whoſe rapacity became a proverb (Σίμωνος ἁρπακτικώτερος, *Simoni rapacior*). This Simon was ſuch a plunderer of the public money, that Ariſtophanes, in his ſtrong manner ſays, *The very wolves run off upon the ſight of Simon.*

The deſpicable *Cleonymus*, whoſe cowardice was as proverbial as Simon's rapacity, and the

the profligate *Theorus*, who buried himself in the stews at Corinth, were also fellow students under Socrates, and it is with just indignation against such execrable characters that Aristophanes exclaims—*O Jupiter, if thy bolts are aimed at perjury, why do these wretches, of all most perjured, Simon, Cleonymus and Theorus, escape the stroke?*

Ἐιπερβάλλει τὰς ἐπιόρκους, πῶς δῆτ' ἐχί Σίμων' ἐνέπρησεν,
Οὐδὲ Κλεώνυμον, οὐδὲ Θεώρον; καὶ τοι σφόδρα γ' εισ' ἐπιόρκοι.

Aristippus, the Cyreniac founder, was a distinguished disciple of the Socratic school, a parasite also in the court of Dionysius, a buffoon and drunkard, the avowed opposer of every thing virtuous, a master and professor of immorality, who laid down institutes of sensuality, and reduced it to a system.

Of Alcibiades I shall briefly speak, for the stories of Socrates's attachment to him are such as need not be enlarged upon; they obtained so generally, that he was vulgarly called Alcibiades's Silenus: When I glance at

at theſe reports in diſfavour of a character, which probably ſtands ſo high in the opinion of the learned reader, I muſt hope for a candid interpretation of my motives for collecting theſe anecdotes, which I do not wiſh to apply to any other purpoſe than merely to ſhew that Ariſtophanes was not ſingular in his attack upon this celebrated philoſopher; neither did this attack bear ſo hard againſt him, as many ſtories, then in general circulation, otherwiſe did: Great authorities have aſcribed his attachment to Alcibiades to the moſt virtuous principle; common fame, or perhaps (more properly ſpeaking) common defamation, turned it into a charge of the impureſt nature: In like manner we find him ridiculed for his devotion to the noted Aſpaſia, in whoſe company he is ſaid to have paſſed much of his time; and Athenæus quotes ſome paſſages of his dialogues with her, which he tells us were publiſhed by Herodicus, and which we muſt either totally reject, or allow him to have been ſubject to ſuch private weakneſſes and frailties as were very unſuitable to his public character: What were the real motives for his frequent viſits to Aſpaſia,

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as well as for his ſeeming attachment to the ſtrumpet Theodote, muſt be left to conjecture; of the fact there is no room to doubt. He is ſtigmatized for his guilty connections in his youth with his preceptor Archelaus, and yet this charge (however improbable it may ſeem) reſts upon the authority of Ariſtoxenus, a man of the moſt candid character, and whoſe credit ſtands high with all true critics. Herodicus the hiſtorian, whom I have before mentioned, and who lived about three hundred and fifty years before the Chriſtian æra, ſeems to have treated Socrates with the greateſt ſeverity, charging him with ſitting up all night drinking and carouſing with Agatho and others, whom when he had left drunk and aſleep, he reeled into the Lyceum, more fit (in the words quoted from the relater) for the ſociety of Homer's cannibals, than of thoſe he found there: In this debauch it is pretended, that although Phedrus, Eryximachus and many other potent drinkers fled the company, Socrates ſate to the laſt, ſwallowing drenches of wine out of enormous goblets of ſilver: He deſcribes him ſitting amongſt laſcivious revellers at a banquet, where dancing-

dancing-girls and boys were exhibiting their indecent attitudes to the muſic of harpers and minſtrels: He expoſes this maſter of morality entering into a controverſy with his ſcholar Critobulus upon the ſubject of male beauty; and becauſe Critobulus had ridiculed him for his uglineſs, he aſſerts that Socrates challenged him to a naked exhibition, and that he actually expoſed his unſeemly perſon to a Pathic and a dancing-girl, the appointed umpires of the diſpute; the conqueror was to be rewarded with an embrace from each of theſe umpires, as the prize of ſuperior beauty, and the deciſion was of conſequence given *ex abſurdo* to the philoſopher, in preference to one of the handſomeſt young men in Greece, and he enjoyed the prize annexed to the decree. If we can believe this anecdote to have been gravely related by an hiſtorian, who lived ſo near to him in point of time, we ſhall ceaſe to wonder that Ariſtophanes had the whole theatre on his ſide, when ſuch ſtories were in circulation againſt the character of Socrates.

As I have no other object in view but to offer what occurs to me in defence of Ariſtophanes,

ſtophanes, who appears to have been moſt unjuſtly accuſed of taking bribes for his attack upon Socrates, and of having paved the way for the cruel ſentence by which he ſuffered death, I ſhall here conclude an invidious taſk, which my ſubject, not my choice, has laid upon me.

In our volume of Ariſtophanes, the comedies are not placed according to the order of time in which they were produced: There is reaſon to think that *The Acharnenſians* was the firſt of its author; it was acted in the laſt year of Olymp. LXXXV. when the edict was reverſed which prohibited the repreſentation of comedies; and it is ſaid that Ariſtophanes brought it out in the name of Calliſtratus the comedian.

In the laſt year of Olymp. LXXXVIII. he produced his comedy of *The Knights*, in which he perſonally attacks the tribune Cleon.

In the firſt year of Olymp. LXXXIX. he produced his firſt comedy of *The Clouds*, and in the year following his ſecond of that title, which is now in our hands, and ranks as third in the volume.

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In the ſame year was acted his comedy of *The Waſps*, in which he ſatirizes the General Chares for his conduct in the unfortunate expedition to Sicily.

In the fourth year of Olymp. XC. we may place his comedy intitled *The Peace*. In the firſt of Olymp. XCI. *The Lyſiſtrata*; and in the ſecond of the ſame Olympiad that of *The Birds*.

The Theſmophoriaguſæ or *Cerealia Celebrantes* and *Concionatrices*, fall within the period of Olymp. XCII. before the death of Euripides, who is ſatirized in the former of theſe pieces.

The *Frogs* were performed in the laſt year of Olymp, XCIII. after the death of Euripides.

The Plutus, which completes the eleven comedies ſtill remaining, and the laſt, to which he prefixed his own name, was produced in the fourth year of Olymp. XCVII.

It is generally ſuppoſed that we owe theſe remains of Ariſtophanes to St. Chryſoſtom, who happily reſcued this valuable, though ſmall, portion of his favourite author from his more ſcrupulous Chriſtian contempora-

ries, whoſe zeal was fatally too ſucceſsful in deſtroying every other comic author, out of a very numerous collection, of which no one entire ſcene now remains.

No. CXLI.

I SHALL now proceed to mention ſome other principal writers of the old comedy, of whoſe works, though once the favourites of the Athenian ſtage, few memorials ſurvive, and theſe ſo ſmall and imperfect, and withal ſo ſeparated from each other (conſiſting only of ſhort quotations in the ſcholiaſts and grammarians) that it is a taſk to collect them, which nothing would compenſate but the hope of being in ſome degree the inſtrument of ſaving from abſolute extinction the names of authors once ſo illuſtrious.

AMIPSIAS was a contemporary of Ariſtophanes, and no mean rival; we have the titles of ten comedies of this author. In ſome of theſe his ſatire was perſonal, but all of them ſeem by their titles to have been

levelled againſt the reigning vices of his time, ſuch as *The Gameſters*, *The Glutton*, *The Beard* (in which he inveighed againſt the hypocriſy and affectation of the prieſts and philoſophers), *The Adulterers*, *The Sappho* (wherein the morals of the fair ſex were expoſed), *The Purſe*, a ſecond attack upon the gameſters, and *The Philoſopher's Cloak*, in which it is underſtood he glanced pretty ſeverely at Socrates.

PLATO was a comic poet, high in time and character; a collection of no leſs than forty titles of his comedies has been made by the learned Meurſius, but very few fragments of theſe are remaining. Clemens aſſerts that Ariſtophanes and Plato were mutually charged of borrowing from each other, which in one ſenſe makes greatly to the reputation of our poet. He is quoted by Plutarch in his Alcibiades, and very honourably mentioned by the famous Galen, by Athenæus, Clemens, Julius Pollux and Suidas. There is a fragment containing four lines and a half, upon a ſtatue of Mercury cut by Dædalus, which has an epigrammatic neatneſs and point in it, that induced me to ren-

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der it in rhime: He addreſſes the ſtatue, miſtaking it for a living figure:

" Hoa there! who art thou? Anſwer me—Art dumb?"
" —Warm from the hand of Dædalus I come;
" My name Mercurius, and, as you may prove,
" A ſtatue; but his ſtatues ſpeak and move."

Plato wrote a comedy perſonally againſt the General Cleophon, and called it by his name; there are others of the ſame deſcription in his catalogue, and ſome of the middle ſort: There are a few lines upon the tomb of Themiſtocles, which have a turn of elegant and pathetic ſimplicity in them, that deſerves a better tranſlation than I can give.

" *On the Tomb of Themiſtocles.*

" By the ſea's margin, on the watery ſtrand,
" Thy monument, Themiſtocles, ſhall ſtand:
" By this directed to thy native ſhore
" The merchant ſhall convey his freighted ſtore;
" And when our fleets are ſummon'd to the fight,
" Athens ſhall conquer with thy tomb in ſight."

The following fragment of a dialogue, between a father and a ſophiſt, under whoſe tuition he had placed his ſon, probably be-

longed either to the comedy called *The Beard*, or *The Philoſopher's Cloak*: It is pretty much in the ſpirit of our old Engliſh drama.

" FATHER.

" Thou haſt deſtroy'd the morals of my ſon,
" And turn'd his mind, not ſo diſpos'd, to vice,
" Unholy pedagogue! With morning drams,
" A filthy cuſtom which he caught from thee,
" Clean from his former practice, now he ſaps
" His youthful vigour. Is it thus you ſchool him?

" SOPHIST.

" And if I did, what harms him? Why complain you?
" He does but follow what the wiſe preſcribe,
" The great voluptuous law of Epicurus,
" Pleaſure, the beſt of all good things on earth;
" And how but thus can pleaſure be obtain'd?

" FATHER.

" Virtue will give it him.

" SOPHIST.

" And what but virtue
" Is our philoſophy? When have you met
" One of our ſect flush'd and diſguis'd with wine?
" Or one, but one of thoſe you tax ſo roundly,
" On whom to fix a fault?

" FATHER.

" Not one, but all,
" All who march forth with ſupercilious brow
" High-arch'd with pride, beating the city-rounds,
" Like conſtables in queſt of rogues and out-laws,
" To find that prodigy in human nature,

" A wiſe

" A wiſe and perfect man! What is your ſcience
" But kitchen-ſcience? wiſely to deſcant
" Upon the choice bits of a ſavoury carp,
" And prove by logic that his *ſummum bonum*
" Lies in his head; there you can lecture well,
" And, whilſt your grey beards wag, the gaping gueſt
" Sits wondering *with a fooliſh face of praiſe.*

(PLATO, COM.)

CRATES, by birth an Athenian, was firſt an actor, and afterwards a writer of the old comedy; he performed the principal characters in Cratinus's plays, and was the great rival of Ariſtophanes's favourite actors Calliſtratus and Philonides; we have the titles of more than twenty comedies, and but four ſmall fragments of this author: I have ſearched for his remains more diligently, from the circumſtance of his having been ſo celebrated an actor; a profeſſion which centers in itſelf more gifts of nature, education, art and ſtudy, than any other. His comedies are ſaid to have been of a very gay and facetious caſt; and the author of the *Prolegomena* to Ariſtophanes informs us, that he was the firſt who introduced a drunken character on the Athenian ſtage; to this anecdote I give credit, becauſe no one could better know how entirely ſuch an attempt

depends upon the diſcretion and addreſs of the actor, who has ſuch a part in his keeping: It is plain the experiment ſucceeded, becauſe even the tragedians exhibited ſuch characters in ſucceeding times. Modern experience ſhews us, how ſubject ſuch repreſentations are to be outraged; the performer generally forgetting, or not knowing, that his own ſobriety ſhould keep the drunkenneſs he counterfeits within its proper bounds. Ariſtotle aſcribes to Crates another innovation with reſpect to the iambic metre of the old comedy, which he made more free and appoſite to familiar dialogue; this alſo correſponds with the natural and facetious character of his drama. I cannot ſay the four ſmall fragments which I have collected bear that ſtamp; on the contrary, they are of a grave and ſententious caſt: One of them is an obſervation on the effects of poverty, which Horace has either literally tranſlated, or ſtruck upon the very ſame thoughts in the following paſſage:

Non habet infelix paupertas durius in ſe
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

I find

I find a ſhort ſtricture upon the gluttony of the Theſſalians; a remark upon the indecorum of inviting women to wedding ſuppers, and making riotous entertainments at a ceremony, which modeſty would recommend to paſs in private, and within the reſpective family where it occurs.

The laſt fragment is a ſhort but touching picture of old age, and the vanity of human wiſhes: I think the turn of thought and expreſſion extremely beautiful.

"ON OLD AGE.

"Theſe ſhrivell'd ſinews and this bending frame,
"The workmanſhip of time's ſtrong hand proclaim;
"Skill'd to reverſe whate'er the gods create,
"And make that crooked which they faſhion ſtraight.
"Hard choice for man, to die—or elſe to be
"That tottering, wretched, wrinkled thing you ſee:
"Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
"And travel on to life's laſt ling'ring day;
"Then ſinking ſlowly down from worſe to worſe,
"Find heav'n's extorted boon our greateſt curſe."

(CRATES.)

PHRYNICHUS was a contemporary of Eupolis, and a writer of the old comedy; a dramatic poet of the firſt claſs in reputation as well as in time. He was an Athe-

nian by birth, and muſt not be confounded with the tragic poet of that name. I find the titles of ten comedies of his writing; theſe are *The Ephialtes*; *The Beard*, (the ſame title with that of Plato); *Saturn*; *The Revellers*; *The Satyrs*; *The Tragedians*; *The Recluſe*; *The Muſes*; *The Prieſt*, and *The Weeding-Women*. We have no other guides but theſe titles to gueſs at the comedies themſelves; we ſee however by ſome of them what ſubjects his ſatire pointed out to the ſpectators, in which the philoſophers had their ſhare as uſual; and by certain fragments it appears, that Alcibiades was alſo treated with ſome perſonal ſeverity.

PHERECRATES is the next author I ſhall notice, a poet famous in his time, and whoſe character as well as genius deſcends to us with the warmeſt teſtimonies of high authority. His ſtile was of that ſort, which has been proverbially dignified as *Moſt Attic*: He acquired ſuch reputation by his poems as well as plays, that the metre he uſed was called by pre-eminence *the Pherecratian Metre*. He was no leſs excellent in his private character than in his poetical one; he

he was attached to Alexander of Macedon, and accompanied that great conqueror in his expeditions; he lived in intimacy with Plato at Athens, and in ſome of his comedies was engaged in warm competition with Crates, the actor and author, of whom I have already ſpoken. Suidas ſays he wrote ſeventeen comedies, and the titles of theſe are ſtill extant: One of them, viz. *The Peaſants*, is mentioned by Plato in his Protagoras: Clemens quotes a paſſage from his *Deſerters* of great elegance, in which the gods are introduced making heavy complaints of the frauds put upon them by mankind in their ſacrifices and oblations: This poet alſo has a perſonal ſtroke at the immoral character of Alcibiades.

Having quoted a paſſage from Crates on the ſubject of old age, I ſhall now ſelect one from this author on the ſame; and if the reader is curious to obſerve how theſe celebrated rivals expreſſed themſelves on a ſimilar ſentiment, he has an opportunity of making the compariſon.

"ON OLD AGE.

"Age is the heavieſt burthen man can bear,
"Compound of diſappointment, pain and care;

"For

" For when the mind's experience comes at length,
" It comes to mourn the body's loſs of ſtrength:
" Reſign'd to ignorance all our better days,
" Knowledge juſt ripens when the man decays;
" One ray of light the cloſing eye receives,
" And wiſdom only takes what folly leaves."

(PHERECRATES.)

Pherecrates intitled one of his comedies *The Tyranny*; it does not appear what particular object he had in view under this title, but from the following fragment he ſeems to have levelled ſome ſhare of his ſatire againſt the fair ſex—

" Remark how wiſely ancient art provides
" The broad-brimm'd cup with flat expanded ſides;
" A cup contriv'd for man's diſcreeter uſe,
" And ſober potions of the generous juice:
" But woman's more ambitious thirſty ſoul
" Soon long'd to revel in the plenteous bowl;
" Deep and capacious as the ſwelling hold
" Of ſome ſtout bark ſhe ſhap'd the hollow mould,
" Then turning out a veſſel like a tun,
" Simp'ring exclaim'd—Obſerve! I drink but one."

(PHERECRATES.)

Athenæus has preſerved a conſiderable fragment from this author, extracted from his comedy of *The Miners*, which I look upon to be as curious a ſpecimen of the old

old comedy as I have met with. It is a very luxuriant deſcription of the riches and abundance of ſome former times to which he alludes, ſtrongly daſhed with comic ſtrokes of wild extravagance and hyperbole. Theſe *Miners* were probably the chorus of the drama, which no doubt was of a ſatirical ſort, and pointed at the luxuries of the rich. By the mention made of Plutus in the firſt line, we may ſuppoſe that theſe *Mines* were of gold, and probably the deity of that precious metal was one of the perſons of the drama.

FROM THE *MINERS* OF PHERECRATES.

" The days of Plutus were the days of gold;
" The ſeaſon of high feeding and good cheer:
" Rivers of goodly beef and brewis ran
" Boiling and bubbling thro' the ſteaming ſtreets,
" With iſlands of fat dumplings, cut in ſops
" And ſlippery gobbets, moulded into mouthfuls,
" That dead men might have ſwallow'd; floating tripes
" And fleets of ſauſages in luſcious morſels
" Stuck to the banks like oyſters: Here and there,
" For reliſhers, a ſalt-fiſh ſeaſon'd high
" Swam down the ſavoury tide: When ſoon behold!
" The portly gammon ſailing in full ſtate
" Upon his ſmoaking platter heaves in ſight,
" Encompaſs'd with his bandoliers like guards,

" And

" And convoy'd by huge bowls of frumenty,
" That with their generous odours ſcent the air."
" —You ſtagger me to tell of theſe good days,
" And yet to live with us on our hard fare,
" When death's a deed as eaſy as to drink."
" If your mouth waters now, what had it done,
" Cou'd you have ſeen our delicate fine thruſhes
" Hot from the ſpit, with myrtle-berries cramm'd,
" And larded well with celandine and parſley,
" Bob at your hungry lips, crying—*Come eat me!*
" Nor was this all; for pendant over-head
" The faireſt choiceſt fruits in cluſters hung;
" Girls too, young girls juſt budding into bloom,
" Clad in tranſparent veſts, ſtood near at hand
" To ſerve us with freſh roſes and full cups
" Of rich and fragrant wine, of which one glaſs
" No ſooner was diſpatch'd, than ſtrait behold!
" Two goblets, freſh and ſparkling as the firſt,
" Provok'd us to repeat the encreaſing draught.
" Away then with your ploughs, we need them not,
" Your ſcythes, your ſickles, and your pruning hooks!
" Away with all your trumpery at once!
" Seed-time and harveſt-home and vintage wakes—
" Your holidays are nothing worth to us.
" Our rivers roll with luxury, our vats
" O'erflow with nectar, which providing Jove
" Showers down by cataracts; the very gutters
" From our houſe-tops ſpout wine, vaſt foreſts wave
" Whoſe very leaves drop fatneſs, ſmoaking viands
" Like mountains riſe—All nature's one great feaſt."

AMPHIS, the ſon of Amphicrates an Athenian, was a celebrated comic poet: We

We have the titles of one and twenty comedies, and he probably wrote many more: By theſe titles it appears that he wrote in the ſatirical vein of the old comedy, and I meet with a ſtroke at his contemporary Plato the philoſopher. He has a play intitled *The Seven Chiefs againſt Thebes*, which is probably a parody upon Æſchylus, and proves that he wrote after the perſonal drama was prohibited: There is another called *The Dicers*; and by ſeveral ſcattered paſſages he appears to have expoſed the perſons of drunkards, gameſters, courteſans, paraſites, and other vicious characters of his time, with great moral ſeverity: There are alſo two comedies, intitled *Women's Love* and *Women's Tyranny*.

HERMIPPUS was a writer of the old comedy, and an Athenian. No leſs than forty comedies are given to this author by Suidas; he attacks Pericles for his diſſolute morals, and in one of his plays calls him *King of the Satyrs*, adviſing him to aſſume the proper attributes of his laſcivious character: He was the ſon of Lyſides, and the brother of Myrtilus, a comic writer alſo.

HIPPAR-

HIPPARCHUS, PHILONIDES and THEOPOMPUS compleat the liſt of poets of the old comedy. Philonides, before he became a votary of the muſe, followed the trade of a fuller, and, if we are to take the word of Ariſtophanes, was a very ſilly vulgar fellow, illiterate to a proverb. Athenæus and Stobæus have however given us ſome ſhort quotations, which by no means favour this account, and it is probable there was more ſatire than truth in Ariſtophanes's character of him. Theopompus is deſcribed as a man of excellent morals, and though he was long afflicted with a defluxion in his eyes, which put him from his ſtudies, time has preſerved the titles of twenty-four comedies of his compoſing: Very little remains upon record either of him or his works.

One ſhort fragment of Philonides is all that remains of his works, and it is a ſpecimen which convinces me that we muſt not always take the character of a poet from a contemporary wit, engaged in the ſame ſtudies.

FRAGMENT

FRAGMENT OF PHILONIDES.

" Becauſe I hold the laws in due reſpect,
" And fear to be unjuſt, am I a coward ?
" Meek let me be to all the friends of truth,
" And only terrible amongſt its foes."

——*Soli æquus virtuti atque ejus amicis.*

I now take leave of what is properly called *The Old Comedy*: In the further proſecution of this work (if that ſhall be permitted to me) it is my intention to review the writers of the *Middle*, and conclude with thoſe of the *New Comedy*.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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